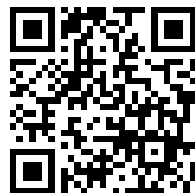


---

This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

Google<sup>TM</sup> books

<http://books.google.com>





*Character-glimpses of Most  
Reverend William Henry Elder, ...*

William Henry Elder

Charac

Mo

William F

# Character Glimpses

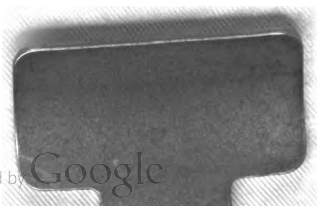
&

Most Reverend

William Henry Elder, D.D.



Archbishop of Cincinnati





Am...





---

---

## **Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder**

---

---

---

---

**All rights reserved**

---

---





*William Henry Elder*  
*Archbp. Cincinnati*

Year	Age	Sex	Height (cm)	Weight (kg)	Body Mass Index (kg/m <sup>2</sup> )	Waist Circumference (cm)	Waist-Hip Ratio	Trunk Fat (%)	Visceral Fat (cm <sup>3</sup> )	Subcutaneous Fat (cm <sup>3</sup> )	Visceral Fat Index (cm <sup>3</sup> /m <sup>2</sup> )	Subcutaneous Fat Index (cm <sup>3</sup> /m <sup>2</sup> )	Visceral Fat to Subcutaneous Fat Ratio
1990	25	M	175	75	24.5	95	0.92	15	150	100	0.9	1.0	0.9
1995	30	M	178	85	27.5	100	0.95	20	200	120	1.1	1.2	0.9
2000	35	M	180	95	29.6	105	0.98	25	250	150	1.3	1.5	0.9
2005	40	M	182	105	32.7	110	1.00	30	300	200	1.5	1.8	0.8
2010	45	M	185	115	34.1	115	1.02	35	350	250	1.7	2.0	0.8
2015	50	M	188	125	35.4	120	1.04	40	400	300	1.9	2.2	0.8
2020	55	M	190	135	37.4	125	1.06	45	450	350	2.1	2.4	0.8
2025	60	M	192	145	39.4	130	1.08	50	500	400	2.3	2.6	0.8
2030	65	M	195	155	40.5	135	1.10	55	550	450	2.5	2.8	0.8
2035	70	M	198	165	41.6	140	1.12	60	600	500	2.7	3.0	0.8
2040	75	M	200	175	43.8	145	1.14	65	650	550	2.9	3.2	0.8
2045	80	M	202	185	45.5	150	1.16	70	700	600	3.1	3.4	0.8
2050	85	M	205	195	46.8	155	1.18	75	750	650	3.3	3.6	0.8
2055	90	M	208	205	47.8	160	1.20	80	800	700	3.5	3.8	0.8
2060	95	M	210	215	48.8	165	1.22	85	850	750	3.7	4.0	0.8
2065	100	M	212	225	49.8	170	1.24	90	900	800	3.9	4.2	0.8
2070	105	M	215	235	50.7	175	1.26	95	950	850	4.1	4.4	0.8
2075	110	M	218	245	51.4	180	1.28	100	1000	900	4.3	4.6	0.8
2080	115	M	220	255	52.3	185	1.30	105	1050	950	4.5	4.8	0.8
2085	120	M	222	265	53.2	190	1.32	110	1100	1000	4.7	5.0	0.8
2090	125	M	225	275	54.0	195	1.34	115	1150	1050	4.9	5.2	0.8
2095	130	M	228	285	54.8	200	1.36	120	1200	1100	5.1	5.4	0.8
2100	135	M	230	295	55.6	205	1.38	125	1250	1150	5.3	5.6	0.8
2105	140	M	232	305	56.3	210	1.40	130	1300	1200	5.5	5.8	0.8
2110	145	M	235	315	57.0	215	1.42	135	1350	1250	5.7	6.0	0.8
2115	150	M	238	325	57.6	220	1.44	140	1400	1300	5.9	6.2	0.8
2120	155	M	240	335	58.3	225	1.46	145	1450	1350	6.1	6.4	0.8
2125	160	M	242	345	58.9	230	1.48	150	1500	1400	6.3	6.6	0.8
2130	165	M	245	355	59.6	235	1.50	155	1550	1450	6.5	6.8	0.8
2135	170	M											

1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2609, 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2617, 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621, 2622, 2623, 2624, 2625, 2626, 2627, 2628, 2629, 2630, 2631, 2632, 2633, 2634, 2635, 2636, 2637, 2638, 2639, 2640, 2641, 2642, 2643, 2644, 2645, 2646, 2647, 2648, 2649, 2650, 2651, 2652, 2653, 2654, 2655, 2656, 2657, 2658, 2659, 2660, 2661, 2662, 2663, 2664, 2665, 2666, 2667, 2668, 2669, 2670, 2671, 2672, 2673, 2674, 2675, 2676, 2677, 2678, 2679, 26



*Handwritten signature or text, possibly "M. J. ..."*

**Character-Glimpses**  
of  
**Most Reverend**  
**William Henry Elder, D.D.**

**SECOND ARCHBISHOP OF CINCINNATI**

Bishop of Natchez 1857-1879, Titular Bishop of Avara and Coadjutor  
to the Archbishop of Cincinnati 1880-1882, Archbishop  
of Cincinnati 1883-1904

WITH EPIGRAPH OF  
**His Eminence James Cardinal Gibbons**  
ARCHBISHOP OF BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

AND PREFACE BY THE  
**Most Reverend Henry Moeller, D.D.**  
ARCHBISHOP OF CINCINNATI, OHIO

**FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS**

**Frederick Pustet & Co.**

Printers to The Holy Apostolic See and The Sacred  
Congregation of Rites

**RATISBON ROME NEW YORK CINCINNATI**

**1911**

WISCONSIN  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

**Nihil Obstat.**

REMIGIUS LAFORT, S.T.L.,  
*Censor.*

**Approbatio.**

✠HENRY MOELLER,  
*Archbishop of Cincinnati.*

**Imprimatur.**

✠JOHN M. FARLEY,  
*Archbishop of New York.*

NEW YORK, NOV. 22, 1910.

LIBRARY  
OF THE  
VATICAN

COPYRIGHT, 1910  
FR. PUSTET & CO.  
NEW YORK AND CINCINNATI

BY  
4705  
F35  
167509  
JUL 10 1911  
1.13



**"Archbishop Elder was the glory of the priesthood and the ornament of the Episcopate which he adorned for nearly fifty years by his apostolic life."**

**James Cardinal Gibbons.**

## Preface

I am sure the friends of the Most Reverend William Henry Elder, D.D., second Archbishop of Cincinnati, will hail with delight the publication of this sketch of his life.

The Author deserves to be complimented for undertaking this work, and for having succeeded in condensing into a few pages such facts and letters, relating to the Archbishop's eventful career, as will give the readers a fair idea of his character and worth. We see portrayed in this little volume the virtues of holiness, charity, and justice emanating from that strong, lively, and active faith which, all who knew the Archbishop will attest, stood out prominently in his life.

I cannot but compare his life to a garden filled with a variety of beautiful and fragrant flowers; from this garden the writer has culled the sweetest and loveliest, presenting them to the admiring gaze of the reader.

St. Augustine remarks that the best way to honor a Saint is to imitate his virtues. While reading the life of Archbishop Elder we ought to bear in mind these words of the learned bishop of Hippo. God grant that all who peruse these pages may not merely admire the virtues and good deeds of the Archbishop, but also be stimulated to imitate them. By doing so they will do honor to this great and saintly pastor of souls.

I hope this little book, the tribute of loving and grateful hearts, will find its way into the home of every Catholic family of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, over which he presided for nearly a quarter of a century, ruling in charity and justice and edifying all by his ardent piety.



✠ Henry Moeller,

Archbishop of Cincinnati.



## Introduction

**"THE** most loving and the most lovable of all the Hierarchy." This was the almost universal expression of press and people when the Most Reverend William Henry Elder passed from earth.

The Apostle St. John gave his disciples only one commandment or exhortation:—*"Love one another."* When love is founded on Christ and exercised for His sake, it changes a mortal into a Saint.

In the life of Archbishop Elder this divine love revealed itself in all his thoughts and actions.

He was, as nearly as a human being can be, the embodiment of this Christ-love, it was the key-note of his whole life, the incentive to every kindly word and deed; and who can doubt that it has won for him that Vision Beautiful whose light, even here below, seemed to shine upon his face.

From among all the testimony of friends, relatives, priests and Bishops, we fail to find one instance in which he seemed to forget, for a single moment, this wondrous law of love. And this love was accompanied by a peace of mind, a dignity of bearing, a tenderness of speech and a kindness of manner that rarely failed to reform the erring, or to encourage the despondent.

If sinners incurred the penalties of the Church because of their obstinacy to grace, it was the Bishop who received the sympathy of the people, and not the culprits who were under his displeasure. On the occasion, a very rare one, of his being compelled to excommunicate

## Introduction

---

*a couple in Natchez, who refused to obey God's law, the feeling of the people went out in these words: — "Our poor Bishop!" making one realize how he loved souls, and how it pained him to inflict censure.*

*Needless to add that he brought many a stray sheep back into the way of righteousness, and shared with them his joy and exultation.*

*When any of his flock had the misfortune to fall into sin, he spoke in so loving and pitying a tone, explaining God's boundless love for sinners, and begging a return of love by obeying His commandments, that few could resist his fatherly pleadings; and many, many souls, because of the love shown them here on earth, were brought to believe in the infinite Love in Heaven.*

*The fire of Divine Love which the Saviour brought on earth, kindled and burned ever brightly in his soul, whether in his rose-lined nest in Natchez, or amid the thorns and briars of his first experiences in Cincinnati.*

*A distinguished layman of this last named city, Mr. M. Ryan, expressed the same thought most beautifully: — "His administration of religious affairs in this Archdiocese was one of love and gentleness, and while others ruled with ecclesiastical authority, he governed with love and kindness."*

*People, his people especially, loved the True, the Good, and the Beautiful, because he set such a bright example of these virtues. His treatment of persons was without distinction. He met the poor, the lowly, the slave, the convict, the Magdalen, with the same divine compassion as he did the great, the free, the powerful ones of earth. To all whom he called his own, in Natchez for twenty-three years, and in Cincinnati for twenty-four, he was father, friend, confessor, guide, consoler,*

## Introduction

---

benefactor, in a manner only understood by those who came under his loving care. When Mr. and Mrs. Storer presented him, on the occasion of his golden jubilee as a priest, with a palatial home a few miles distant from Cincinnati, he declined the gift, to the great surprise of his devoted clergy. "It would remove him," he said, "from among his people and they would not be able to reach him readily in case of need."

The beautiful surroundings, the luxurious home, the peaceful neighborhood had no attractions for his loving heart, which desired only the good of souls and not the comfort of his frail body. Yet his refusal was so fraught with loving appreciation, that Mrs. Storer and her generous husband felt for him only renewed esteem and admiration.

This love for his people was carried even beyond the bounds of time. Before death called him from his flock, he had already made provision for his burial; — not beneath the altar of his grand Cathedral, not with "silver trappings," nor in silk or satin trimmed casket; but, in a plain unadorned coffin, he was to be laid "among his people," beneath the sod, on Price Hill. Surrounded by the graves of those whom he loved and led towards their God, he sleeps in peace, leaving his memory as a benediction to all who are trying to follow in his footsteps.







## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

### Part First — Early Life

ARCHBISHOP ELDER'S great-grandfather was one of the first English settlers in Maryland. During the Anti-Catholic ascendancy in the Colony in the first half of the Eighteenth Century, a law passed prohibiting the celebration of the Mass except in individual households. To aid in alleviating this state of affairs, Mr. William Elder built a very large log house about two miles south of Emmitsburg, in part of which he resided. The greater portion of this house consisted of one vast room, whose walls extended to the roof, and here the Holy Sacrifice was offered up. Thus no one was deprived of hearing Mass. This historic mansion, dear to Maryland Catholics, was still standing as late as the year 1850. It gradually dilapidated and tottered to its fall; at the present day, there is scarcely a trace of it to be seen. It is not surprising that God blessed the children, who were born under the roof that had been raised to protect God's interests in this world.

William Elder's first wife was Ann Wheeler, who left five children. His second wife was Jacoba Clementina Livers, daughter of Arnold Livers, Esq., gentleman. This Arnold Livers was a devoted partisan of James II, the last Catholic King of England.

When this unfortunate monarch was dethroned through the plottings of his nephew and son-in-law,

## **Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder**

---

William of Orange, Mr. Livers fled to Maryland and became the proprietor of a large estate. So deep was his attachment to the Stuart-King, that he swore he would name his first child, James. As the first born proved to be a girl, and the loyal father insisted upon the promised name, the priest who baptized the child latinized the appellation, and hence the singular name, Jacoba. The latter was the mother of six children. From her son Arnold Elder came the title to the ecclesiastical authorities of Maryland for the farm upon which now stands the structure known as Mount St. Mary's College. Another son, Thomas Elder, grandfather of the subject of this sketch, emigrated from Maryland to Kentucky at an early date in the history of the State, taking with him his entire family, with the exception of his son, Basil Spalding Elder, who was at the time a successful business man in Baltimore. Basil S. Elder married Elizabeth Snowden; and these were the parents of William Henry Elder, late Archbishop of Cincinnati, who was born March 22, 1819.

If ever a man had a right to be called a true American, it was Archbishop Elder, who could trace back his ancestry in this country for more than a hundred and seventy years!

Basil S. Elder, like his father and grandfather, was a model of every Christian and civic virtue. He trained his children, seven sons and three daughters, in knowledge and obedience and the fear of the Lord, and not one of them ever abandoned the Faith, or ceased to live according to its teachings. He lost his saintly wife in 1860, when he had himself reached the eighty-seventh year of his age. He felt the bereave-

## Early Life

---

ment keenly. A little later, at the height of the Civil War, when he lost the timepiece which he had used for sixty years, he was overheard by one of his daughters, saying sadly to himself: "I have lost my precious wife, I have lost my good old watch, and I have lost my country! It is time for me to be called home."

The Archbishop's parents, although blessed with so many children of their own, always had two or three orphans beneath their roof, a custom of frequent occurrence among the Catholics of Maryland, in the days of old.

"An orphan child always brings blessings upon a family" was a household saying, and results proved its truthfulness. To these adopted brothers and sisters, as well as to his own, the young student wrote many an interesting letter, detailing College joys and pastimes; but very few have been preserved.

At eighteen years of age, he wrote to his eldest sister, who had become a Religious:

"It has been, perhaps, three years since I began to make my vocation the subject of my prayers. For the last fifteen months I have remembered it almost daily in my supplications to Heaven, and since August last, I have made it the especial object of most of my Communions."

What an example to young men! How few "remember their Creator in the days of their youth" and try to discover what is His Will in their regard.

Again at the age of twenty-two, for the letter is dated 1841, he writes to some one of his household these words:

"All I wish to say is that since a Resolution almost always includes a restraint upon ourselves, we can not expect to keep it

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

without sometimes feeling that restraint or privation; and therefore, we should prepare for such, with a determination not to indulge when the moment for trying it comes."

We give here two letters written when the late Archbishop was only thirteen years old. The first shows a seriousness of mind and a maturity of thought not often found in youths of such a tender age. The second is a real boy's letter to his little brother, Charles, then about ten years old. "Billy" was the affectionate name by which the Archbishop was known in the family circle, during his boyhood's days.

MOUNT ST. MARY'S, December 31, 1832.

*Dear C —*, I have just finished my letter to Mr. J—. You will see in it a sufficient excuse for not answering yours before. I was very much pleased with your letter particularly as it was your own composition. If you write oftener it will be beneficial to you and me, too. I will try to send the "Boys Own Book" as soon as possible, perhaps it will accompany this letter. I got the box in time and thank you all for it. We had very little pleasure at Christmas. A turkey, potatoe pudding, a little sweet-bread, some sausage, stewed apples, and mince pie formed our dinner. And skating on rough ice was our amusement for Christmas, 1832. I had the honor of serving Mass and serving table, too, on that day. The next day it rained and St. John's day muddy! ! What do you think of that? A wet day for St. John's feast! The only regular feast day we have in the year. But the dinner made up for it, and in the evening it had so cleared up that I could walk to Mr. P— and got a good glass of egg-nog. Mr. Purcell, [later Archbishop Purcell] himself treated the musicians as soon as they came from Mass. We had recreation the next day and one of the boys by his own foolishness was near getting drowned. While he was skating he attempted to go where no person else dared to go, and as all expected, he broke in over his head and didn't touch bottom after all. He sank once and when he came up he caught hold of ice and scrambled out. If the other boys hadn't encouraged him he would have given up even after

## Early Life

---

he caught hold of the ice. The other boys were afraid to go near him, and before they could get a stick to pull him out, he was safe; so there it ended. Saturday we had studies, to-day we have studies, but very few masters kept their classes. They go to classes, but they don't ask any lessons; they sit and let the boys talk.

January 1, 1833.

*My dear little Brother,* — A Happy New Year! To you and all the family. I hope it is not raining in Baltimore as it is here. I cannot say anything about our New Year's holiday, since it is just beginning, for I have not yet had breakfast, but I can say that it is raining now, and I think we will have a cold drizzle all day.

Ask Mother to send me a roundabout as soon as possible. I have only one that fits me, so I must use it Sundays and Mondays continually, and I would like the collar to be very stiff. I sent my love in Mr. J's. letter, tell him you are to have some. And if he asks "Who told you?" tell him Billy.

P. S. I would have sent you a beautiful white rabbit just six months old, of the best English lop-eared breed, but — I couldn't catch one of that description, hem! I guess you couldn't. Why Billy's had bad luck for rabbits this year.

Years afterwards in 1891—fifty-eight years later—a relative who had carefully treasured the old letter of 1833, sent it to him simply to amuse him with its quaintness, its antiquity and childish memories.

On returning it, the venerable Archbishop wrote as follows:

"I remember distinctly my writing that little joke about the rabbit. These are happy remembrances, and if these little earthly trifles bring so much pleasure, what will be the grand enjoyments and heavenly affections that our hearts will experience when they see God, and see our friends as they are in Heaven."

This name "Billy" was touchingly referred to in one of the Cincinnati papers, at the time of the Archbishop's death. We quote it here:

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

"When he was nine years old it fell to his lot to take his younger brother Charles to school. The younger boy had never left his home and was very much frightened as the unfamiliar scenes of the modest schoolroom dawned upon him, and he held tightly to his brother's hand.

"'Just wait here a minute,' said William Henry. 'I will hang our cloaks up where they belong, I'll be back in a minute.' William then went to the side of the room to hang the garments, his little brother watching him with eager eye, lest he should lose sight of him. For a few seconds, William was buried among the winter garments, when to the amusement of the whole school, the little fellow sobbingly cried out: 'Where's Billy!' Quickly the answer came, 'Here I am,' as the sturdy big brother emerged from his temporary hiding-place."

Twenty years later, had Charles asked that question, "Where is Billy?" the reply would have been: "He is a priest of God, serving His Master at the Altar, and training other young men for the same high duty." If ten years after that, the same question had been asked, the answer would have told of the missionary zeal of the newly-consecrated Bishop in the poverty-stricken and scattered diocese of Natchez, embracing the entire State of Mississippi:— and if twenty odd years later the same question had been put, the answer would have told how the idolized Bishop of Natchez had gone northward to bear the burden of a debt larger than had ever fallen on a mortal man within the limits of the States; and when, a quarter of a century later still, the loving question rose from many hearts, it was answered by the cry of every one that knew him: The honest, tireless, saintly Churchman has gone to his Eternal recompense, to be with the Divine Master whom he loved and served so well.

## Early Life

---

The following letter was written when William Henry was still a school boy, before he had graduated. It shows the earnestness and candor of his young heart, — and later events proved that he did exactly what he had positively said he did not wish to do; namely to pass from the position of student to that of seminarian, without having an intermission between the two states of life. He graduated in 1837, and entered the Seminary of Mt. St. Mary in the fall of that year.

EMMITSBURG, THE MOUNTAIN, Saturday evening, 25th.

I think, my dear sister, for I have never been put to the trial, that I have as much confidence in you, who have always shown so tender a regard for me, as in any one else living. On this point at least, where I may hope for so much from the advice and the prayers to which your affection prompts you, I feel perfectly free to tell you all that I have thought upon the subject. Many years ago, when I was very small, it used to be a favorite notion of mine, that I was destined to be a Priest. This early idea was most probably only the effect of the hopes I had sometimes heard expressed by Mother, and the playful predictions of others. Whatever may have been its origin, I used to cherish it, particularly after hearing that my fondness for books, in which I took great pride, was some indication of its truth. After entering College, as I advanced in my studies, my mind became more enlarged, and I began to feel that desire for mixing with the world, which is so common, nay, natural to young persons, and the pleasure I had felt at thinking myself called to the immediate service of God, began to diminish and it seemed to me an agreeable discovery, when I reflected that it was only an idea which I had entertained in childhood, and that there was a probability, at least, of my vocation being directed in another way. This first led me to a sense of my uncertainty and then, uncertainty as to my vocation naturally led me to think and reason more seriously on the subject. It has been perhaps three years since I began to make it occasionally a subject of my prayers. For the last fifteen

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

months I have remembered it almost daily in my supplications to Heaven, and since August last, I have made it the especial object of most of my Communions.

If my own prayers and those, which I trust have been offered for me by you and the rest of our family, have had any immediate effect, it has been rather to confirm my early prejudice, and your fond hopes than otherwise. But it seems to me that I feel them, not so much in any better knowledge, of the intention of Providence towards to me, as in a better resignation to Its will, whatever it may be. My final determination is yet to be made. My early notions, though they have at times been almost destroyed, still seem natural to me. They are now less positive, but they seem to grow in my nature. I believe, were it not for my knowledge that they were so early imbibed, the impression now, in my mind, would be almost sufficient to determine me. But knowing or at least believing their origin to be what I first stated, I am afraid to trust to them.

As to my present intentions, I have frequently thought of leaving College for a year at least, to try my dispositions more fully. I cannot say whether this was first suggested by my real anxiety to reach the truth or my desire to taste the dangerous pleasures of the world.

It has certainly been my darling plan. I mentioned it in my vacation to Father, but he gave no decided opinion upon it. But whatever may be the unknown motive that urges me to it, it seems even on calm consideration, to be at least in some degree, supported by reason. In the first place, as I have already said, I am afraid to trust the simple feeling, which is as yet the only thing which weighs down the scale. Unless some more decided intimation be given, it seems to me I am bound to wait, and even to try myself in other courses.

In the second place, though I have here seen many examples to the contrary, I yet think eighteen is rather an early age for one to join a seminary, supposing such to be my decided call, and besides, I have always felt averse to the idea of so sudden a change in situation and in duties in the same institution and towards the same persons.

If it should be my vocation to join a seminary, I would prefer

## Early Life

---

having intermission between the times of finishing as a student and first appearance as a seminarian. I greatly regret my fault of procrastination has prevented me from consulting long since Father Xaupi. His advice of course will be a principal guide. So far have my first feelings swayed me that I have never formed a definite idea of what other profession I could attend to.

Another letter of interest, perhaps, to any student of St. Mary is the following. William Henry, Collegiate, had at this time become William Henry, Seminarian, and a visit from a Bishop was therefore of double interest.

THE MOUNTAIN, June 2, 1842.

You know that we have Bishop Dubois with us. He arrived this day two weeks. As soon as we heard the stage driver's signal, there was such a bustle as I never saw before in bounds. The rifle-corps had just come down from the grotto, where they had been enjoying the ceremony of presenting the prize to the best drilled squad, or rather receiving it from the worst drilled — being the final payment of a bet between them, paid down neither in rags nor rusty metal but in immediately available funds from the Banks of Sr. Felicitas. They were ready for fun, though not in the best bodily dispositions for parade, but the word "to arms" was given, all rushed to the armory, the key-keeper came up full speed from the ball-alley, but he was much too late for the impatient soldiers. Such a calling for the key, "Rifles, rifles, where is the powder? Who'll ring the bells? Get out the drum!" Such a running of officers for their swords, musicians for their instruments, prefects calling to ranks, and seminarians hunting for their best hats. All had time, however, to subside before the stage was in sight, and we really received the venerable Bishop handsomely. The Company to be sure was not in uniform, but they marched well, and "that Mountain Band" were a "leettle" above the two *clarionettes* that got drowned in the *sleet* the day Mr. Mc. C—— came, St. Patrick's, 1838. We escorted him to the parlor. I say we, for Seminarians took the lead, after them were the civil students, then the Lances and last

## **Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder**

the Riflemen. The riflemen gave some good salutes and they paraded with music for half an hour.

In 1842, the young Levite was sent to Urban College in Rome, and in 1846, on Passion Sunday, he was ordained priest by Mgr. Brunelli. His letters, only a few of which have been secured, give evidence of his deep earnestness, his growing spirituality, and his abiding love for his country and his home.

The following letter is addressed to a young man who had evidently consulted him on spiritual matters and particularly in regard to a religious calling. The second part of the letter describes the illumination of St. Peter's Church on Easter night. This magnificent display was a regular annual custom and typified the Light of the Resurrection and the joy of humanity in that wondrous mystery. The spectacle was sublime, but it no longer takes place. Those, however, who have once witnessed this illumination will enjoy the description which follows:

ROME, PROPAGANDA, April 14, 1844.

Let me congratulate you now, upon the completion of the first year of your majority, and express a heartfelt hope that you can look upon it with a consciousness of having done one year's service to your country whether by your conscientious voice in the choosing of her rulers, or by the not less effective means of a simple good example and religious discharge of all your duties, as citizen, son and Christian. It will be of itself a rich fruit for one year, if you have only settled decisively and with perfect satisfaction to your conscience the great question which I ventured to propose to you a year ago. Your last letter is perfectly silent upon it. If that was because you felt a reluctance to talk about it except with your Director, you are perfectly right, and I am glad that you understand the subject well enough to see that it is not to be settled by an epistolary correspondence, but depends

## Early Life

---

on prayer and on consultation with him who is to you the representative of God. But I must confess, I have some fear that the case is not exactly so. It is so much in my own nature, that I am willing to believe you, when you say that it is also in yours, *to let things take their own course*. I am afraid that after starting the subject with your Director and holding one or two conferences, you did not exactly turn your back upon the difficulties, nor professedly give up the question, but that you let it hang and drag until you half lost sight of it, or suffered yourself to relapse into a state of do-nothingness, a false content with remaining as you find yourself, without any positive act of judgment that Providence wishes you to be there. Now, in a great many cases, this content is a very praiseworthy disposition: but it is my notion (your Director will tell you whether you are to follow it) that the great question of one's vocation almost always demands an actual investigation patient and conscientious, and that no one ought to be satisfied until he can lay his hand on his heart and say before God: "After a diligent use of the means, you have given me I am satisfied that this is your Will in my regard; and if those means have deceived me, I look with confidence and right to You for such graces as will prevent the evil effects of the deception." If my assertion be too general, still I feel sure it holds good for our country; where most certainly hundreds mistake their vocation not by an obstinate resistance, but from want of a sufficient inquiry and perfect docility; from yielding too readily to the influence of circumstances and of dispositions; from the prevalence, too, of a set of false maxims, by which we apply to the religious life and the sacerdotal dignity, a reasoning which we would not apply to any other state, nor to any other object of desire in life. If perhaps you have 'let it drop' because your Director did not urge you on, remember what is his name and his duty: he is only to *direct* you when you enquire; to show you the way when you are progressing, — but the inquiry must come from *you*, the pursuit *you* must begin, and *you* must continue. In a word, he is the pilot, who, as long as the boat is moving, can direct its course; but the moment it stops, he loses, not the duty, but the power to manage it. This then is not your Director's affair, *but your own; yours* must be the motion, the patience, the labor, the per-

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

severance, and *yours* will be the reward. In the same spirit then, as in my first, I say if you have come to a satisfactory decision, God be praised, and may you enjoy a long and prosperous career in the course He has marked out for you, as a preparation for His own blessed Society. But if procrastination or indolence or timidity or anything else has prevented a decision, I implore you by all your hopes of peace in this life and happiness in the next, to arouse yourself to a full sense of the importance and responsibility of the matter. Make this a subject of consultation with your Director.

We have just passed through the functions of Holy Week. I did not see much of them except in our own Church, where although on a less showy scale they are performed with an exactness and solemnity which to a foreigner, makes them remarkable. Our Repository is considered one of the most beautiful and devotional in the city. I have seen only a few of them, but I believe that generally the appearance of them is different from what it is with us. They are commonly called 'Sepulchers,' from association with the melancholy becoming to the day; and, in accordance with the same feeling, instead of being made cheerful and gay with flowers and delicate hangings, the study seems to be to make them give a cast of sadness. I visited that of the Pauline Chapel in the Vatican. It consisted simply of a large pyramid rising behind the altar and entirely covered with candles, leaving only a narrow passage up the side, for the Deacon to ascend with the Chalice. On the summit was a small Altar in the form of a sarcophagus or ancient tomb, and on this was placed the tabernacle of a simple square form, with no canopy but with two large conical candelabra above it, which completed the pyramid. All the candles were lit; the windows were closely curtained, and the severe simplicity of the splendid pile, with the silence and half obscurity of the rest of the Chapel gave a spirit of solemnity, which it was almost impossible to resist. We had already, too, been disposed for it; for along the magnificent stairway, and in the Ducal Hall, which was also half darkened, we had passed among groups of soldiers, some standing guard in silence, others talking scarce above their breath, and all with their arms reversed, as in mourning. It had perfectly, the air of a palace whose Master was lying in funeral

## Early Life

---

state. At the opposite extremity of the same Ducal Hall is the entrance to the Sistine Chapel. At the time of our visit the Holy Father and the Cardinals were attending the Mass of Good Friday. We went there for a short time, but the crowd was too great for us to witness anything. We heard the conclusion of the Passion, which was chanted by three Deacons, as on Palm Sunday. In the part of the multitude the whole choir of singers unite, and the arrangement is much admired for the happy representation of numerous and discordant voices, yet all blended in a simple harmony. To return to our Repository, the spirit and the effect is the same as in the others; but the manner of producing it is almost the reverse. No candles are seen, but those of two candelabra at the outer corners of the recess; the others are hidden so as to illuminate without appearing. Upon the Altar is a large glass shrine containing nearly a full-sized representation of Our Saviour's lacerated body in the tomb. Upon this rests the simple square tabernacle, with no other decoration than a bas-relief upon the door. Against the wall behind, is a large cross with the instruments of the Passion giving out rays of light, and on each side upon small screens that stand out are Angels among the clouds, mourning over the dead Christ. The arrangement in itself might be called theatrical; but the absence of all gaudiness, the subdued pale cast of the paintings, and even the simplicity of the whole, together produce an effect most congenial to the soul that would mourn in quiet over the sufferings of her Saviour. On Easter night we witnessed from a distance, the far-famed illumination of St. Peter's. Though it seems to me I spoke of it last year, yet I cannot forbear telling of it again; for its charming effect the second time, surpassed my recollection of it, as much as the first view surpassed my expectations. On Easter night the whole exterior of the edifice from the summit of the Cross down to the ground, and the whole of the grand Colonnade around the Piazza is illuminated. It is a beautiful opportunity to admire anew the wonderful elegance of the architectures when every curve is so distinctly and luminously traced upon the blackness of the night. So grand and yet so delicate, and so mysterious those lines of fire in the midst of darkness that I felt as if some charm had come over me and I was seeing the realization of some fairy tale. But

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

of a sudden it changes! At an hour an half after sun-down, the clock strikes one o'clock at night: at that instant there is a commotion, a change of some kind beginning, but what it is, where it began, what is the nature of it, what it is going to do there is no judging, for in ten seconds it is done, and the whole building is covered with a sheet of red glaring flame. The effect is magical, and the wonder still increases when you soberly consider the immense and varied surface which is changed as instantaneously. For a while, it looks like an immense furnace glowing and fading and glowing again as the wind plays around it; afterwards as the first flare dies away, the lines again come out distinct. But as the lanterns have been exchanged for great blazing lamps, the light continues to be brilliant and almost dazzling, and at a distance the dancing of the flames makes it twinkle and sparkle as if there were millions of diamonds behind it. 'Tis said that the Cross is watched for on this night, and clearly seen far out at sea. What a sight for a Catholic sailor on a stormy night!

Give my most affectionate love to Father and Mother. All the letters I receive say too little about them. I beg them to continue to remember me every day in their prayers and to give me their frequent blessing that I may return to them a good Priest.

We have not been able to ascertain to whom the following letter was addressed, but venture to insert it as giving an interesting description of St. Peter's.

ROME.

But first, let me give you a little calculation which has occurred to your own mind. From the time I was a child, I have — I suppose very naturally in trying to conceive great heights, taken Washington's Monument for a standard. As I stood in St. Peter's and looked straight up at the large frescoe painting in the ceiling of the dome, I found myself almost unconsciously forming a comparison and judging that the clear distance up to the top must be very nearly equal to the height of our monument. A moment's reflection on facts and figures showed me that the base of the dome was as high above the pavement on which I

## Early Life

---

stood, as the platform around the monument is above the ground, so that the great Architect has well fulfilled his promise that he would hang the Pantheon in the air. As for my measurements, were the first monument complete, a second might be built on the top of it (only leaving out the square base) and it would not quite touch the ceiling at which I was looking: this is for the interior. Above this rises the little cupola or lantern, which is itself as high as a lofty palace, and with the great copper ball and the cross above it makes one hundred and forty five feet more. That is to say from the pavement to the top of the cross, the height is only twenty-seven feet less than would be three Washington Monuments built one on top of the other. The diameter is one hundred and forty feet clear. You can compare it with any space of which you know the measure. Figure then to yourself such a dome, raised up in the air to such a height, and of a form so graceful and light that it hardly seems to press upon its columns; and the still more light and airy cupola on top with the globe surmounted by the triumphant cross: then add the two twin cupolas at its sides, which set it off like smiling tiny children around their mother's chair: and now you either have some idea or you are persuaded of the impracticability of getting any idea, of St. Peter's dome.

The following letter reveals that glowing flame of divine love which illumined all his thoughts and made him refer every thing, every gift, however trifling, to the greater glory of God, even when a young priest. As he was ordained in Rome, reference is here made to Propaganda-College.

THE MOUNTAIN, January 4, 1847.

The Alb has been received. B—— handed it to me in the President's room on the evening he arrived. He seemed to be almost as proud to be the bearer, as I was to be the receiver of your beautiful New Year's Gift. I know that while your affection and kindness have given the direction to your labors, and perhaps even, the immediate occasion of them, still the true moving principle has been a pious zeal for the honor of God and for the beauty

## **Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder**

of the ornaments attending the Holy Sacrifice. I will have the pleasure of using it for the first time on the Epiphany. It is the great festival of the Propaganda, and I will sing High Mass in which I feel it a duty to unite my intention with that of the Propaganda, offering the Sacrifice for all Missionaries and Missions throughout the world and, in general, for the Propagation of the Faith. I am sure you will be gratified by so Catholic an application of your labors; for it is not too much to say that you share in the merits of the Sacrifice, so that wherever its fruits are felt, whether in supporting the martyrs of Christ or converting the Indians in Oregon, you have part in the work.

Advice to a young man who had not decided as yet upon his choice of life. How charmingly he brings in the story of the Magi, and how fervently he applies its teachings!

The confidence you show towards me ought not to have waited for a response. But you have long before this, put the subject just where it ought to be, under the consideration of your Spiritual Director, and I have nothing to add but to encourage you to act with confidence according to his advice, or, if he has not led you to a decision, to entreat you to be perfectly candid in all your communications with him, — to open your mind to him as it actually lies open to God. Excuse me for giving this advice, for it is not always easy in practice and where much depends upon it, the devil is active in increasing the difficulties. Still harder is it to free oneself from biassed judgments. Think not of worthiness or unworthiness, that is not your affair, but God's. He gives His grace to whom He pleases. Think not of difficulties whether in circumstances or in your own disposition. Remember the three wise men who set out knowing neither the road nor the distance nor the difficulties before them. "We have seen His Star — and we are come." Want of energy may be in the way, but God knows that better than we do, and will shape our duties according to our nature. He will give us the grace to change our nature according to our duties. We are not to forget, however, that it is always our duty to struggle against our weaknesses.

## Early Life

---

Pray hard to know and to follow with simplicity the "Will of God": Try, at least, every Sunday to make a special and sincere act of resignation into His Holy Hands. Oh! if He should reward your fidelity by calling you to His special service! What a happiness if I should see you taking shelter in His holy sanctuary and find you still closer at my side; — but it is not in this little corner that I can tell you my feelings on the subject and perhaps it is better to leave you entirely uninfluenced. Remember, however, one sentiment which I heard first from Fr. — "God will never suffer Himself to be outdone in generosity." If He requires you to make a sacrifice, do it with a generous unreserved heart, and He will assuredly meet you with a recompense a hundred-fold, and probably He will not wait for the next life, but give a foretaste of it even here.

In 1846, Father Elder returned to his College home and for ten years worked in and around Emmitsburg, endearing himself well in that vicinity, while his love for the poorest and lowliest marked him as one of saintly nature. His devotion to an old bed-ridden negro, living on the mountain side, to whom he carried help, spiritual and temporal, almost daily, was spoken of years after his departure as one of the many instances of his humble holy heart.

THE MOUNTAIN, October 20, 1852.

TO HIS BROTHER.

It is very cheering to see our chapel filled with Catholic boys; there are not more than four or five outsiders. Our whole number I think is a hundred and twenty-nine, and they seem to be a very fine set of boys indeed; well behaved, docile, studious and easily induced to attend to their religion. So far God seems to make manifest His greater blessing on our house; for though bad behavior and trouble used to come quite as much from Catholic students as from Protestants, and even much more, yet for the last fifteen months we have had nothing that we can call trouble, neither at home nor abroad. Even that miniature stam-

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

pede of some of our little Louisianians seems to be in some measure correcting itself, as I believe some of those concerned have since declared that they were misled. I trust that our Holy Mother will watch over us and teach us how to turn our position to the best advantage for all those souls put under our care. A full school will be a poor consolation to us unless we have it animated with a good Catholic spirit of solid piety, but if we are faithful we may count on that with certainty.

I am glad you continue well in body and soul. I trust whatever becomes of the former, you will always take good care of the latter. It may animate us all, to remember the celebration of last November, and revive our resolutions not to be missing from the circle around our good Father and Mother in heaven. We cannot make sure of it by a generally good life and occasional approach to the holy Sacraments, but only by being faithful *every day* to avoid sin and serve God. That is the way that our excellent Parents have deserved so well of God, that He has given them unusual blessings in this life, the types of more glorious ones in the next. Mother has always had an extraordinary spirit of prayer, as we all can remember, and if we want to be with her, we must aim at imitating her. These thoughts are always good for us and I write them as much for my own profit as for yours.

TO HIS BROTHER.

THE MOUNTAIN, May 1, 1853.

It seems you had fine opportunities for spiritual improvement during the season of Lent. What you say of your churches reminds me of true Catholic Cities in which Lent appears indeed to be a time of prayer and penance. I trust you were not contented with admitting the eloquence of the sermons; but that you reduced to practice what was so well inculcated. I sometimes feel a little uneasy when I think of your being suddenly transplanted from our old home, with all its associations of early piety and all its family influence, — to such a busy and gay city as the southern metropolis, with so many enticements, parties, balls, operas, etc., etc. Have those things led you to become less attentive to your religious duties and practices of piety? If not, I thank God from the bottom of my heart, for it is a mark

## Early Life

---

of a good deal of firmness and more than most young men can boast of. If they have, I do not ask you to make a confession to me, for I have no doubt you have made a more useful one to somebody else, but I do hope you will be able soon to assure me that you have resumed all your former diligence. Heaven is a great place, and worth ten thousand times more trouble and privations than you can ever give for it, even if you live like a hermit; don't refuse, then, to give that little for it, which God requires. The Mission given by the Redemptorists at the Cathedral in Baltimore seems to have been a grand affair indeed. I have no doubt you heard something of it, from eye-witnesses and partakers. It is a great comfort to know that we are not without company in our railroad enterprise; but I am afraid that we will leave you without any, for there are so many fine projects for railroads in our neighborhood, that no one of them can gain any considerable preponderance, and we cannot afford to have two. The present state of mind seems to be to let the road come to Westminster, and by that time *may be* something will happen to determine whether it shall come any further, and by what route. Till then I suppose we may consider ourselves in the position, and perhaps deserving the name, — of the animal that is said to have starved between two bundles of hay.

TO HIS BROTHER.

THE MOUNTAIN, June 21, 1853.

Last night I was awakened out of my first doze, by some sort of missile dashing through the window over my door, and falling slam upon the floor. As it seemed to lie quiet after the first dash, I thought I would too, and this morning I was greatly surprised and partly not, by discovering that it was nothing less than your letter or letters, — grape-shot I suppose, running from June 7th to 11th.

I hope that I may gather from your second paragraph that the advice you speak of, arrived not only when it was needed, but when you were disposed to make good use of it, and that your last victory has given you a permanent advantage which you will take care to maintain. Your idea is a correct one, the Holy Ghost Himself tells us through the mouth of Job that "Man's

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

life is a warfare upon earth;" and it is too true that in that warfare there are very few who fight with uninterrupted success. But there are many who seldom or never meet with a very serious reverse, and it is quite practical for every one who chooses, to escape ever being *captured* as you describe it, by our spiritual enemy. To be plain, it is the privilege of very few and after long practice in virtue to avoid offending God by venial sins or other faults, and, in our weakness and temptations, God only expects that we should be always trying to avoid them. But it is in the power of every one, not only theoretically but in practice, to keep himself free from mortal sin; not by his own strength of character, but by the grace of God which he is sure of obtaining, if he asks for it in earnest and applies for it at the ordinary channels, Prayer, the Sacraments, and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Do not then, my dear Brother, consider as a light matter one single mortal sin. It is a greater evil than all the miseries of life, greater even than the fires of hell; for God has made these fires as a lesser evil to remedy the greater: — it is a greater evil than all the sufferings, the cruel agony and death of Our Divine Saviour, for He of His own free will underwent those sufferings to keep us from committing sin: and while hanging on the Cross, His loving Heart, was infinitely more pained by any one mortal sin, that He saw in any of us, than it was by all the tortures of His Sacred Body, and all the mockery of His enemies. I would be sorry then, if your words should mean that you thank God, for bringing you from time to time to the Sacrament of reconciliation, while afterwards you suffer yourself to be betrayed into mortal sin again, and do not return to Him until you find it necessary on account of such misfortune. That would not be a very lively gratitude: He might take it for an insult. Be regular, my dear Brother, and be frequent in your approaches to the furnace of divine love, and endeavor each time to warn your own soul a little more and a little more, with that heavenly flame, which is the only source of peace and true contentment in life, and a foretaste of the happiness of heaven. And add to it some good reading, if it be only a page a day, according to the advice of your Confessor — a little fuel thrown on, to keep the spark from dying before you approach again.

## Early Life

---

As to your own state, — you lay down the true principle — your great obligation is to unite yourself with God in this life and in the next: and to accomplish that, you must in everything enquire His Holy Will. Marriage is not exactly a duty to all people in the world: but the general rule is that those whom God wishes not to marry are commonly called by Him to some other state of life: so that the being in the world gives a very strong presumption that a person ought to marry. That presumption may be confirmed or it may be over-ruled, by other considerations of soul and body: and the only way for you to come to a safe conclusion is to seek God's Will, by serving Him, praying to Him, reflecting on your circumstances, and consulting with your spiritual director to whom He will give light to aid you.

What a priest's heart this letter reveals, a heart deeply imbued with a saint's reverence for the sacrifice of the New Law!

MOUNT ST. MARY'S COLLEGE, Nov. 16, 1854.

TO HIS MOTHER.

Although it is not long since I wrote to you both, addressing my letter to Pa, yet I must say a few words to you again to congratulate you on your anniversary now at hand; and I address this to you. I am happy that you are both well, and that you are able to go so early in the morning to assist at the Holy Sacrifice. I often remember how I was edified once, when a boy, by that good simple Nancy Anderson, when I asked her once how she was, and she answered, with all her fervent exclamations, that she never could be otherwise than well all day long, whenever she had been able to hear Mass in the morning. I admired it then without fully understanding it; but I have often admired it more since I did understand it better. And when people sometimes wonder at your getting up and going to Mass, although you are obliged afterward to lie down again, I think of Nancy's reply and conclude that God has given you the same lively faith that He gave to her, and that the comfort and refreshment of the soul during the Holy Sacrifice, makes even a day of sickness pass more pleasantly to

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

you, than would a day of health, without that assistance. And certainly if sick people so often find themselves improved both in spirits and in body by a kind visit from a cheerful neighbour, and feel the better for it all day long, or even for several days after, it is no wonder that a Christian soul should feel comforted and made happy for one day by a half hour's intimate conversation with our Lord, the Physician of souls, the kind Adviser, the sweet Comforter, the close warm Friend, who loves us more than the Angels of heaven love Him. And during the Holy Mass it is not merely a conversing with Him, but it is a witnessing of that great miracle of His love, His immolating Himself, a Sacrifice to His Father, for our sins and for our happiness. It often seems to me that there is hardly any occasion better for giving us fervor in our prayers and acts of love than when our Saviour is lying upon the Altar, a victim offering Himself to His Eternal Father, to supply all the defects in our offerings. How close does it bring us to the terrible throne of God, to see right before us, within our reach, the Victim on which God is looking with such complacency! What confidence does it give us to stand before that throne, and beg for what we want, when God, Himself made Man, is begging for us, and renewing that awful Sacrifice of Mount Calvary, by which He obtained a right to receive for us all He asks for! And oh! what acts of thanksgiving can we offer during Mass! How we can praise and congratulate God that the end for which He made every creature is here so abundantly accomplished, His own divine glory. Every act even of a dumb creature is a tribute to the power and wisdom and glory of God; but all the acts of creatures, of men and angels and of the Blessed Virgin, though vastly pleasing to God, and all of them adding to his Glory — yet all together are not equal to one offering of the Heart of His divine Son, nor to the glory given Him by one single Mass. I congratulate you, then, my dear Mother, on your zeal in hearing Mass as often as you can. Were you able to listen for half an hour to the singing of all the Saints and Angels, to see them in their Choirs surrounding the throne of God and hear their myriads of heavenly voices, praising His Majesty, with songs so full of joy that human ears cannot listen to them any more than the eye can look steadily at the sun — were you to witness all this for half an hour, it would

## Early Life

---

not be equal to what you do witness in assisting at the Holy Sacrifice, where instead of Saints and Angels, the Son of God Himself is singing the praises of His Father, not by songs and hymns, but by actions, the greatest of all possible actions, the immolating of Himself; continuing in an unbloody manner, the wonderful sacrifice of His own life for the divine glory.

But you must not let this letter get me into trouble with the rest of the family. Perhaps they find that you go to Mass, when Prudence would require you to stay at home. You must not forget that Prudence is the very first of the Cardinal Virtues. It is sometimes hard to distinguish between true Christian Prudence, and an unchristian fear of little obstacles; but when it is seen what Prudence requires, we cannot please nor glorify God by acting contrary to that virtue, because then we act contrary to His Will; and, although in such a case our good intentions may cause Him to deal lightly with our imprudence, yet in truth we would have done more glory to Him, and gained more merit to ourselves, by acting differently. If sometimes, then, you find that you cannot hear Mass, there is still a way by which you may lose nothing, but perhaps gain more than by hearing it. Just call to mind what a satisfaction and what a merit it would be for you to be present at the Holy Sacrifice, and when you are burning with desire, then make a sacrifice of all that satisfaction and merit, to the Holy Will of God, Who chooses that you should not go. The value of such sacrifices of your own will in spiritual things cannot be counted; you will know it when you receive their reward in heaven.

I am afraid that I am getting out of my place writing such long letters on spiritual things to my own Father and Mother; but it is not with an idea of telling you anything that you do not know; it is rather in the spirit of what we call a *conference* — talking over truth that we both know, in order to imprint them more lively on my own soul as well as on yours.

I thank Pa for his letter, and I will enclose five dollars for Aunt Wright's Church, if I can get it before the mail leaves; if not, I will send it soon. I will see too whether we have any Church ornaments that we can give away. This has been a week of extra business, so that I have not been able to see about it yet. We

## **Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder**

---

are all well here. Good bye, a happy anniversary and many happy returns of it. Pray for me, both of you, my dear Parents, and bless me,

Your affectionate son,

WM. HENRY.

The wise counsels in the following letter will be appreciated by many a young couple.

THE MOUNTAIN, June 5, 1856.

God has granted you the blessing that you so ardently desired. May you both long continue to enjoy the happiness that a holy union is calculated to confer in this life. How great it shall be in your case, will depend in a great measure on your fidelity to the good dispositions with which you have received it. Let me congratulate both of you, and thank you too for adopting the suggestion of a thoroughly Catholic marriage at Mass with all the blessings that the Church has so singularly multiplied in that case, while she has left the marriage ceremony in all other cases so very short. My gratification arises from the thought of the good it will do to you, and of the honor done to God. Perhaps others may imitate your example or find it easier to do the same, because it has already been done. But if no one does it after you, your own act remains forever for your greater merit and God's greater glory. Fr. Faber tells us, you may remember, in "All for Jesus," that the least little act for the glory of God, is a more valuable and durable work than a hundred miles of railroad. See what an extent of internal improvement you accomplished then on your wedding holiday, and what an amount of permanent capital you realized and deposited in a Bank which is always good, provided only the creditor makes sure to be there *in person* to present his claims. If man sometimes forgets the want of his dinner on a day of pushing business, or if he works on through all kinds of inconveniences and discomforts for months, a year at a time, he will be all the while in first rate spirits thinking what a handsome sum he is drawing in. So I hope that the thought of your accumulated fortune, so easy to secure, will keep you always cheerful and happy, even if you have to go through months and years of hard work and discomfort too. And are you going to

## Early Life

---

have them? Is our Lord, in order to keep you from being too well satisfied with this exile where you have lately found so much to please you, is He going to trade it over with a larger proportion of its native troubles, so that while He gratifies the wishes of your heart, He may show that it can never be filled up on earth, and make you both sing together: "There's nothing great, there's nothing good, there's nothing true, — but Heaven?"

Reference is made in the following to the noble organization of young men "the Howards," who helped the sick poor during the fearful epidemic of the year 1853, in New Orleans, and its environs.

THE MOUNTAIN, November 10, 1853.

*To dear C—*, Your letter, or note as you please, was very welcome indeed, for I had been quite uneasy about you all, and yourself in particular, as more exposed than the others, to the terrible pestilence which has been scouring your section of the country. I received yours the very night that F— & M— came to the neighborhood; and the next morning they showed me two other letters from you and one from T—. They made me more sensible than before, of the awful ravages of the disease. Thank God that you have all escaped. May He give you the grace to put to good account the longer life He grants to you, rather than to so many thousands around you, by leading you to love and serve Him better and better every day. May T— especially enjoy a great reward for his charitable attention to the sick. It is indeed a beautiful, noble, heroic spectacle to see young men devoting themselves in that way to works of charity, which seems to be the province only of religious. Fr. B— told me long ago that New Orleans existed only in virtue of its charity. The whole position and condition of the city were so unnatural, that nothing preserved it from destruction but the blessing of God in reward of the charity displayed there in the sickly season, and especially by the young men. The spectacle is too beautiful and the work too valuable to suffer any marring or any checking through discord. May their generous self-devotion be not only rewarded in this life, with prosperity, honor and

## **Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder**

---

self-approbation: but may it lead those who display it, to such a knowledge and love of God, as will secure them the infinite reward of eternity.

During almost all the sickness in Emmitsburg I was in Baltimore, I did not understand it to be as bad as it was, and it seemed to be confined altogether to the town. Hearing at length from Mr. W—— that the priest and his brother were a great deal in town attending the sick, I thought it well for me to return. When I got here I found Rev. Thos. McCaffery laid out! He had gone to bed with severe pains the evening before, and died at nine o'clock that morning. He had overlooked his own premonitory symptoms for several days, in his zeal to attend to others. Even when he felt the pains he thought it was his old enemy, the rheumatism. On the other hand he had looked on the epidemic as a dangerous one from the beginning, and said before he began to attend the sick, that he would prepare himself for death beforehand.

A letter dated June 11, 1857, is an echo from Emmitsburg of all who knew him there. "I heard," says the writer, "of his appointment to the See of Natchez. Oh my! how he is missed and lamented at his dear mountain-home, and by the poor, especially the most abandoned, the negroes, etc., all around and as far as Waynesburg. He had that congregation for eight or ten months or more.

"All regret exceedingly the loss of one who had a heart like that of Archbishop Carroll, a heart of beniginity and sympathy for all human woes. I have been repeatedly told that the Mountain Congregation was in a state of desolation both before and after his departure. In fact the people cannot find words to express their grief: as for my own, I have poured it out before the Altar. When I find my heart and my eyes filling, I fly thither, and our dear Lord sustains me.

## Early Life

---

“There was nothing soft or effeminate in his character; on the contrary, his love for God’s service seemed only to increase and strengthen in him all that was upright and manly.

“During these years in Emmitsburg he was professor of Theology in his Alma Mater, and filled that chair until he was consecrated Bishop of Natchez, in 1857, by Archbishop Kenrick of Baltimore.”





## **Part Second — Bishop of Natchez, 1857–1880**

**T**HE diocese to which Bishop Elder was called includes the whole state of Mississippi, which is eight thousand square miles larger than the state of Ohio, which has three Episcopal Sees. The missions were poor, Catholics were few, and traveling was beset with difficulties. There was scarcely a mile of railroad, and his visits were often made on foot, or by public, sometimes private conveyances. Surrounded by Non-Catholics whose prejudices came from their ancestors, he soon won their respect, for they felt that Bishop Elder was truly a man of God, and their regard for him increased as time went on. To say what he was to the Catholics of his diocese, is beyond the writer's ability. He lived for them, and loved them for twenty-three happy years; and the fragrance of his holy apostolic life lingers even yet around the Natchez diocese, and sweetens every thought connected with his name.

To his people he was Bishop, pastor, father, friend, advisor, consoler, benefactor. Every joy and every sorrow were brought to his paternal notice and nothing seemed too trivial for his gentle interference.

On one occasion, a young lady of his flock being displeased with a former friend determined to cancel her name from among those invited to a birthday party. The facts reached the Bishop's ear. A Catholic maiden to be so unkind, so unforgiving! The young lady was



Rev. J. J. O'Connell

## THE BISHOP OF NATCHES, 1847-1873

THE Bishop to whom Bishop Baker was called to succeed was the whole state of Mississippi, which he covered with a square miles larger than the state of New York, and with thirty episcopal sees. The mission of the Bishop was slow, and travelling was beset with difficulties. There was scarcely a mile of rail road in the state, and often made on foot, or by the slowest of conveyances. Surrounded by a hostile population, the pagudées came from their own sense of self respect, for they felt that the Bishop was a man of God, and their regard for him was intense. He went on. To say what he accomplished in the course of his diocese, is beyond the power of words. He cared for them, and loved them for twenty years, or more; and the fragrance of his life is still on the fingers even yet around the Natchez people. He had intense every thought connected with his flock.

He was a simple man, a Bishop, pastor, father, friend, and a man of God. He was a very just and every one was loyal to his personal name and nothing was too good for his gentle interference.

One day, when a young lady of his flock being married, and a former friend determined to cancel the marriage, these invited to a birthday party. The Bishop had the Bishop's own. A Catholic maiden was invited, and so unforgiving! The young lady was



**Archbishop William Henry Elder, D.D.**



## Bishop of Natchez

---

asked to call upon him. She came, she listened to his loving words, and gentle peace entered into her soul. The invitation was sent, accepted, and all uncharitableness took wings and flew away. Hundreds of similar instances could be given, all of which only show how he taught his people that love of one's neighbor is next to love of God.

"How they loved one another!" could well be said of the Bishop and his flock, for his rule and their obedience were both founded on the sublime motive of doing whatever was most pleasing to Almighty God.

A young man, a drummer, traveling through Mississippi after Bishop Elder had been transferred to Cincinnati, wrote back to his family that he had never realized, before this visit, the meaning of the words, "the odor of sanctity," but it was indeed true in regard to Bishop Elder, for the very atmosphere seemed fragrant with his virtues. This fact so deeply impressed his mind that a new light dawned upon him, leading him to nobler aspirations.

So deep was the veneration and love of the Bishop's flock, that when his successor was appointed, the address of welcome to the new Bishop by one of Natchez' most distinguished laymen, was also a panegyric of the one they had lost, by his promotion to the See of Cincinnati. Entwined with words of love and greeting to their new spiritual guide, are expressions full of regret and undying affection for the Bishop gone from their midst.

Extract from address of Mr. John B. Quengles, to Right Rev. Bishop Jansens, successor of Archbishop Elder, in Natchez.

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

While, Rt. Rev. Bishop, you are accredited by Rome and Peter's great Seal to assume Episcopal Authority here, you are also bearer of other credentials which appeal still more direct to our hearts and sympathies. You came heralded and approved by Bishop Elder himself, as the best fitted, his first choice, for the vacant Bishopric of Natchez. No higher certificate could you bring, and exceptional indeed must be the record, which deserves and elicits his unqualified approval. It is at once a passport to our hearts which we open wide to you, Rt. Rev. Bishop. You come, not as a stranger in our midst and we pledge you in advance, a large share of the devoted affection so universally felt for the great and good Bishop Elder, whose loss we shall never cease to deplore as almost a calamity to religion as a Bishop, and a great loss to our state as a Citizen and a patriot, a sentiment fully shared by a liberal minded Community, irrespective of Creed. It would gratify a filial pride to dwell on some points of his wonderful record of nearly a quarter of a Century, a period crowded with momentous events in all of which he took a prominent and honorable part. Conspicuous among these may be mentioned our fratricidal four years' war, during which he was ever active, aye, spent himself for friends and foe alike in the Military Hospitals and in the charnel-houses, where smallpox ravaged the poor deluded colored race mercilessly, and who, rather than compromise principle and ecclesiastical independence when threatened by Military assumption and violence, preferred banishment and insult to submission. Then the two devastating epidemics, which as by a special providential dispensation Natchez itself escaped, but which made a Golgotha of Vicksburg and other cities in the Diocese, none but the recording Angel could tell all he did and suffered in that dread period, when, taking his life in his hand, for weeks he ministered, not only to the spiritual wants of the poor victims, but performed for them the lowest menial offices. Thus he continued until exhausted nature rebelled and death almost claimed him for a victim. But this is not the time and place to speak of these things; besides, it would require a volume to do them justice. Alas, he is gone from among us bearing the affectionate good-will of all classes, and leaving a name held in benediction. Cincinnati's day of visitation came,

## Bishop of Natchez

---

and, strange it is, the obscure Diocese of Natchez was selected to furnish a deliverer. Although we claim not Abraham's merit in his submissive obedience to the divine command to sacrifice his son Isaac, we yet feel no little satisfaction in our disappointment, in having given a victim for the Sacrifice and a Moses to lead our brethren of Cincinnati out of the wilderness of the trouble in which they were hopelessly wandering before Bishop Elder's advent. We acknowledge the wisdom of the choice made by Rome, although our hearts will ever be sore because of his removal.

The Bishop's life during the war was too active to leave much room for letter writing; but this one, to his Vicar General, shows his zeal for souls and his untiring devotion to the sick and wounded.

CORINTH, May 26, 1862.

Travelling is slow. I started May the 14th, for Okolona spent a whole day in the hospitals there — 1300 sick. At Rienzi, I stopped for several hours — 300 sick. I only reached Columbus, Saturday, and found 2300 sick there.

At Mass, Sunday, we had sixty persons, and twelve men at Holy Communion. Coming back from Mobile, where I had gone to look for Chaplains, I remained two days at Macon; there were one thousand sick soldiers. I baptized many at all these places.

Yesterday, while in camp with Capt. Felix Hughes, his regiment received orders to go to the field. Fr. Picherit and I followed in an ambulance; but thank God, there was no fight at all. We are now going back to camp to hear confessions. If possible, I will start for Natchez to-morrow, but I must stop on my way at Holly Springs. Health excellent, clothes scarce, and some stolen.

The hospitals are almost emptied—in readiness for wounded, whenever the next battle takes place. Write to me at Jackson.

In January 1863, he traveled by buggy to Woodville, thence by train to Bayon Sara, and then made his way to the camp of Fort Hudson. A godsend to

## **Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder**

---

the men, he was treated with courtesy by the officers, and his heart was happy because he could labor for souls. The sick he cheered, the dying he consoled. Seated on a rough soap box, he would spend hours in the tents, hearing confessions, anointing the dying, and fortifying all by the word of God and the Bread of the Strong.

On May 1st was fought the bloody battle of Port Gibson, and many were dying, unattended by any Priest, in hospitals and on the field. Bishop Elder hurried off in a borrowed conveyance to the scene of suffering. Over the battle-strewn wrecks on the ground, he hovered, an angel of mercy, giving a gentle word, a loving touch, a quick absolution, according as the poor sufferer needed help.

Then through hospitals and into private residences he passed, humbly happy in being able to exercise his ministry of peace and reconciliation. Vivid were his descriptions of the scenes encountered, and caustic his pen to headquarters, when neglect or only hireling service were given to the brave soldiers of either army.

Yet sad news poured in upon him; letters telling of his priests dead or dying in hospitals, others disabled by exposure, his people ruined, and no help available. After the Emancipation Proclamation had worked havoc among the ignorant freed men, luring them from comfortable homes to improvised quarters, without sufficient food or care; and when disease, even the loathsome smallpox, seized them, into their midst went the Bishop, lavishing upon them every spiritual and material care.

Hundreds were dying with no comfort, no friends;

## **Bishop of Natchez**

---

in squalor and dirt; with curses on their lips and despair in their hearts. He daily visited them in company with his heroic priest, Father Charles Van Queckelberge, comforting and assisting them in their pitiable struggle for freedom — whether in life or in death.

These ministrations were continued as long as there was one left to need them. On one occasion, he found the door of one of their wretched hovels resisting his attempt to open it. Pushing it with increased force, a dead body fell at his feet. As he stepped into the foul enclosure, two other prostrate forms lay before him, yet with some semblance of life. One breathed his last as the pitying Bishop stooped to help him. The other lived long enough to be baptized and hear a few loving words of prayer and pleading, as his soul passed away.

Archbishop Keane, speaking of those days of civil strife, says:

“Whatever Christ-like zeal and charity could do he did to alleviate the horrors of war for the living and to bring the mercies of God to the dying, irrespective of party or of side. The boys in gray and the boys in blue were all the same to his fatherly heart. He could not settle the quarrel between them, but, whether their cause was right or wrong, they were all equally honest and equally dear to him. In this spirit he labored among them, and this spirit he breathed into the devoted band of priests and sisters, who under his command toiled for the bodily and spiritual welfare of the combatants night and day, whatever flag claimed their allegiance. Such a man ought to have been beyond the reach of partisan animosity, but he was not so fortunate. A Union official issued a decree that in all churches, prayers should be offered for the President of the United States and the success of the Union arms. Bishop Elder saw at once that this order could not be obeyed. Whatever might have

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

been his own personal convictions, he knew that to submit to such a decree would be to offer insult to the people among whom his lot had been cast. Moreover, the soul of the Bishop arose in honest indignation against the upstart, who pretended to dictate what the worship in the churches should be. At first he expostulated with the gentleness of argument that ought to have convinced a reasonable adversary. But when the command was reiterated, with all the bitterness of both partisan hatred and religious bigotry, then the Bishop recalled the warning of St. Paul, that, in the hour of trial and danger, the man of God must remember the God who giveth life, and the Saviour Who suffered under Pontius Pilate. In the majestic dignity of that thought, he told the petty tyrant that his behest could not and would not be obeyed. And when angry words were followed by threats and violence, the gentle Bishop showed that he had both the courage of a man and the heart of a martyr, and went with unflinching calmness to exile, and virtually to prison.

"Such an outrage could have but one result; his sentence was soon revoked and no such folly was afterward attempted."

As a matter of historical interest, we will let the entire correspondence between the Bishop and the Federal authorities follow here. The first letter was addressed to President Lincoln.

"TO HIS EXCELLENCY, ABRAHAM LINCOLN, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES:

*"Excellent Sir,* — It becomes my duty as Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Natchez, which comprises the State of Mississippi, to claim Your Excellency's protection against an attempt of Brigadier General Y. M. Tuttle, to interfere with my ecclesiastical administration.

"Pardon the length of this communication. I have condensed it as much as I could do, consistently with my obligation of giving you the information, which the importance of the case makes it necessary for you to have.

"General Tuttle requires of me to read, or direct the priests under my jurisdiction to read, in the public services of the Cath-

## Bishop of Natchez

---

dral Church of Natchez, a certain prayer, which is found in some Catholic prayer-books, for the public authorities, ecclesiastical and civil. He did, indeed, say that he gave me no order, but only a request to read it as a favor to him. But he immediately nullified his own distinction by declaring that, if I did not comply with his requests, he would consider it as a proof of disloyalty, which would be subject to punishment. He further declared his meaning in these words: 'You are free to read it or not, as you see fit, but if you do not choose, you must take the consequences.' And in reply to my inquiry, whether he would not before passing a sentence against me, make a specific charge and allow me a hearing on the matter, he said that I might have a trial or I might not. I have not recited the prayer, nor directed others to recite it. I have explained to General Tuttle that said prayer is not at all a part of our regular church service, and is not found in the book which contains our service — the Missal; that it has, indeed, been recited sometimes during the divine services, but only at the free choice of the priest or Bishop, and even with some stretch of his discretionary powers, since the canonical usage of the Church excludes the public recital during Mass of prayer for any person not contained in the Missal; and that in a great many Churches of the United States — I believe the majority of them — it never has been recited publicly.

"It has been remarked to General Tuttle by an officer of the United States Army, that this prayer would be especially incongruous at present, because it recommends to the favor of Almighty God both the Government of the United States, and the Governor, Legislature, and civil officers of this State — Mississippi — the declared enemies of the United States. The General says he wishes it to be read with the self-contradiction 'just as it is in the book.' I have told him that in Natchez, during the time that I have been here (about seven years), we sometimes read it, sometimes omit it, and sometimes read other prayers in its place; that, for a while, I read a similar prayer for the Confederate authorities, but afterwards I laid aside all these prayers of a local character, and conformed more closely to the approved usages of the Church by adopting a prayer, belonging to the authorized Liturgy, the Litany of the Saints. This change was

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

made in November, 1862, long before the United States forces occupied Natchez, and while the Confederate military were in quiet possession of the place. And I have told General Tuttle that if the Confederate authorities had attempted to compel me at that time to resume the reciting of the prayer in their behalf, I should have resisted them as I resist now.

"My resistance is based simply on the ground that our Church service is a matter to be regulated exclusively by the authorities of the Church.

"In the first interview General Tuttle did not ask me to read the prayer. He inquired whether it was a part of our public services and he appeared to be satisfied with the explanation given him. At the second interview he complained that I had not complied with his request, although in truth he had not made one. The invitation to the second was a very summary request to call on me 'as soon as possible,' and, in the course of the conversation he offered me a gross indignity, saying very deliberately and emphatically, that he hated traitors, he believing that there were many traitors in this community; he believed that I was one. I had not uttered a word nor a sentiment in that conversation, nor the preceding one, that could provoke the utterance of this insulting term, nor give offense even by implication. I had not even refused explicitly to comply with his demand; I had only been explaining in as pleasant language as I could, the reasons why he ought not to expect it of me. Whatever indignation I felt at this gratuitous outrage, offered to a defenseless priest by a military commander, with armed guards at his door, I suppressed my feelings, except so far as to say, 'General, I thank you for your compliment. That is an exceedingly harsh term you have applied to me. I request you to state the facts on which you ground your charge; the evidence that you have for them.' He answered carelessly, that 'this was fact enough.'

"At the third and last interview I had with General Tuttle, I requested two officers of the United States Army, of my acquaintance, to accompany me, Major James A. Farrish and Major O. T. Turney, both paymasters in this department, and the latter a Catholic. Many things were said on each side during these three conversations. If you desire the particulars, I shall give

## **Bishop of Natchez**

---

them to you as accurately as I can, from notes, which I wrote down shortly after the occurrence. The most of the points of the first two were repeated in the third, and for the correctness of my notes concerning this last, I have the attestations of the two officers just mentioned.

“On all three of these occasions I was accompanied by the Vicar-General of the diocese, the Very Rev. M. F. Grigon. As these conversations took place in the public office of General Tuttle, and had relation to my public official duties, in which all Catholics are interested, they soon became publicly spoken of, and they have excited great uneasiness, not only among the members of our Cathedral congregation, but also among the Catholics of the North, now in Natchez, both members of the Army and civilians.

“I remarked to General Tuttle, that such an attempt to compel a Bishop to alter the form of divine worship in his cathedral, would necessarily give pain and alarm to the Catholics of the whole country. I might have added, that the greatest trouble would be felt by those persons who look with most confidence to the Union and the Government of the United States as the protection of their religious liberty. I told him that the Catholic officers and soldiers of his command, and of all portions of the United States Army would feel themselves injured in this attempt, — the first that I have heard of to dictate to a Bishop with regard to his ecclesiastical administration; and that certainly these soldiers did not deserve such an offense at his hands.

“The earnest friends of the Union here have been the first ones to express the greatest solicitude about the matter, in view of the consequences which such a precedent would have in the United States, and the impression it would produce abroad; and they were first to recommend that it be at once referred to Your Excellency. For awhile I thought it would be more in order to submit it first to the Commander of this department, Major General McPherson. But the uncertainty that I am under as to where my letter could find him just now, added to the urgency of the case and its intrinsic importance, have determined me to have recourse immediately to Your Excellency.

“General Tuttle told me that he was acting in this matter

## **Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder**

---

on his own responsibility. Accordingly, I most respectfully pray Your Excellency to give such directions as will secure us from this and all similar interferences. The preceding commanders at Natchez, General Ranson, General Crocker, General Gresham, and Colonel Johnson found no reason to molest us. They let us attend to our spiritual ministrations in peace, and even favored us with such facilities as were in their power. And not one of them had reason to complain of any evil consequences to their authority and respect. I have never attempted to influence the political opinions or conduct of the people under my care, and the clergy of this diocese, to the best of my knowledge, have abstained from any such attempts, or rather, I believe, they have never felt disposed to teach politics: but they have devoted themselves to rendering spiritual services to all who desired them at their hands without distinction of politics, of section, or of color.

"One among them, one whom I most esteemed and loved, Rev. Basil Elia, lost his life a year ago from having volunteered with my approval, to go to the assistance of the dying soldiers of the United States Army, opposite Vicksburg, who had no Catholic chaplain at that time to give them consolations of religion which they valued vastly more than their lives. His own congregation had been dispersed by the events of the war, and when I wrote to him to come into another portion of the diocese, he asked me to allow him to go rather to those soldiers, because they had more need of his labors. After three weeks of fatigue and exposure he contracted the prevailing sickness and died at Memphis, April 2d, 1863. At this moment a priest of our cathedral is lying sick for three weeks in consequence of incessant labor among the soldiers and others connected with the United States service, a large number of them being negroes, dying of the smallpox. And this present letter has been delayed many days and I am compelled to send it, without as careful a revision as I should like to give it, because I have been personally attending to some of the labors in this place.

"We have not received any temporal remuneration, nor applied for any, but the least one can expect is your protection. This is not merely a question concerning personal annoyance to ourselves. It is one that involves the religious liberties of thou-

## Bishop of Natchez

---

sands of Catholic soldiers and the millions of Catholics, not soldiers, who are subject to the laws and government of the United States. For all as well as for myself I ask protection, and, in calling on Your Excellency I am sure I shall not ask in vain.

"I have the honor to remain with profound respect, Your Excellency's most humble servant,

WILLIAM HENRY ELDER,

Bishop of Natchez.

Natchez, Miss., April 7, 1864.

Father Early placed the remonstrance in the hands of Hon. Francis Kernan of Syracuse, N. Y., then in the House of Representatives, afterwards United States Senator. The result is shown from the following reply:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, Washington, April 27, 1864.

*Right Reverend Sir,* — Father Early entrusted me with your memorial to the President, touching military interferences with your ecclesiastical authority. This morning I called on the Secretary of War, Mr. Stanton, and laid the case before him. It is but justice to him to say that he received it in a most liberal spirit, and promptly told me he would cause the necessary instructions to be communicated to General Tuttle this day to remedy the interference. I trust you will have no further trouble.

Pardon me for adding that I hope you will say nothing which indicates any triumph over the military commander. This would only cause him to seek occasion to annoy you, while it would embarrass the Secretary, who desires in a quiet way to relieve you from improper interference.

Yours respectfully,

(Signed) FRANCIS KERNAN.

It is needless to say that the Bishop carefully abstained both in public and private conversation from expressing any offensive exultation. He felt that it would be undignified, and, moreover, he was sincerely

## **Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder**

---

thankful to Secretary Stanton for the protection thus extended to religious freedom.

He did, however, in his letter of thanks to Mr. Kernan, express his belief that the United States authorities should in some way, least objectionable to General Tuttle, make known their ruling, so as to hinder other commanders in Natchez and elsewhere from interfering unnecessarily with religious worship.

The result showed the correctness of his apprehensions. General Tuttle, indeed, ceased from further interference, but there seems to have been no official order given to him, or none was filed among his papers, and later, when he left Natchez and Colonel Farrar was placed in command, he, finding General Tuttle's original order not cancelled, republished and demanded its enforcement. The Bishop had an interview with him. The Colonel manifested an amicable spirit, and expressed his regret at the difficulty, but he claimed that his duty obliged him to enforce the order. He consented, however, to suspend it for a while, that the Bishop might have time to submit a written letter for his consideration.

When the letter was ready for presentation, Colonel Farrar had gone away, and the post was commanded by General Brayman. He took the letter, and after reading it, gave the answer that "Military orders are to be obeyed, not discussed." The Bishop replied respectfully that the order in question did not fairly come under the class of "Military orders," since it was not addressed to a person in military life; it did not command a military service nor a service required by military necessity. It was rather a "religious order," issued by a military commander.

## **Bishop of Natchez**

---

General Brayman continued the correspondence for several days, asking information about the prayers that had been recited, etc., etc. It resulted in the following order:

HEADQUARTERS U. S. FORCES, Natchez, Miss., July, 22, 1864.

SPECIAL ORDER NO. 11, EXTRACT V.

It appears that while the country was at peace, William Henry Elder, Bishop of Natchez, caused to be read as a portion of the proper and recognized religious service of the Roman Catholic Church within his ecclesiastical jurisdiction, the usual prayer for the President of the United States, etc., whereby was signified and taught a true and loyal spirit towards the Government and authorities of the United States, and a pious desire for the prosperity and maintenance thereof.

It further appears that after the establishment of the pretended "Confederate" States of America, in violation of the Constitution and the laws of the United States, and in treasonable and armed rebellion against the same, the said William Henry Elder, Bishop of Natchez, did cause to be abolished and stricken from the proper and usual service of the Roman Catholic Church within his ecclesiastical jurisdiction the prayer for the President of the United States, etc., and did substitute and cause to be read in place thereof a like prayer for the President of the pretended "Confederate" States, etc., whereby he publicly renounced the allegiance to the Government of the United States, and declared allegiance to a power then in armed resistance against the same, and compassing its overthrow; such act being in violation of his duty as a citizen of the United States, and of evil example to those under his ecclesiastical authority; he well knowing that thereby was instigated and promoted rebellion and armed hostility against the lawful authority of the United States.

It furthermore appears that on the 18th of June, ultimo, a special order (No. 31) was issued by the officer then commanding the United States forces at Natchez, requiring that the prayer for the President of the United States, etc., should be restored and appropriately read as a part of the divine service (as had

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

been the custom, aforetime, in the Roman Catholic Church at Natchez).

The said William Henry Elder, Bishop of Natchez, being still in rebellion against the United States and ill-disposed towards the Government thereof, not having repented of nor retracted his treasonable conduct and teaching as aforesaid, but on the contrary repudiating and denying the authority of the Government and its officers in that behalf, and having for a long time, though frequently warned, contumaciously refused, and still utterly refusing obedience to said order, thus encouraging the people under his authority in treasonable practices, and impairing the force of discipline; it is therefore ordered:

*First* — That the said William Henry Elder, Bishop of Natchez, be expelled from the lines of the Army of the United States, not to return without permission, under pain of imprisonment during the continuance of the rebellion.

*Second* — That the Provost Marshal close and hold military possession of St. Mary's Cathedral, situated in the City of Natchez, and all other houses or places of worship within the command and under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of said Bishop William Henry Elder, in which the prayer for the President of the United States has been heretofore, but is not now read.

Inasmuch, however, as the said Bishop William Henry Elder has requested in a respectful manner that any action under the said Order No. 31, be suspended "until communication can be had with the authorities at Washington," it further ordered:

That action under said Order No. 31, and the paragraphs *First* and *Second* of this order be accordingly suspended until further orders, and that in the meantime the Provost Marshal of Natchez cause the said William Henry Elder, Bishop of Natchez, to report in person within twenty-four hours after receiving a copy of this order, to the officer commanding the United States forces at Vidalia, and remain within his military lines under penalty of the immediate execution of the before-named orders.

The Provost Marshals at Natchez and Vidalia, respectively, will see to the strict observance of this order.

By order of

BRIG. GEN. M. BRAYMAN.

J. H. ODLIN, *Captain and Asst. Adj. Gen.*

## Bishop of Natchez

---

Special Order No. 11 was issued, and the Bishop was commanded to report within the military lines of Vidalia, Louisiana, and there remain under guard. Until recourse could be had to higher authority, the promulgation concerning the cathedral was commuted. When the time for parting came, a vast concourse of people lined the water's edge, and as the boat pushed off from the Mississippi shore the multitude fell upon their knees, beseeching his blessing, while from his own overcharged heart swelled up these touching words: "God forgive me for not doing much more for such a people."

Bishop Elder at once prepared the following for the Secretary of War:

To the HON. EDWIN M. STANTON:

*Sir*, — Enclosed you will have a copy of a Special Order, No. 11, July 22d, which explains itself.

It was notified to me on July 25, and accordingly, I am now in Vidalia, Louisiana. I can have no written communication without permission of the Commander.

Last week I had the honor of transmitting to you copies of the correspondence which had been passed between the Commander and myself. This new order of July 22d gives a new aspect to the difficulty. The first published order of June 18th, (printed June 28th), required all pastors, without regard to their foregoing conduct, "to pronounce a prayer appropriate to the times, and expressive of a proper spirit," etc. It was against that order that I remonstrated in my former communications. I trust they produced some effect — since the present order does not re-assert that right with regard to all clergymen, but is based upon a charge against me, individually — that I made myself sometime ago an instigator and promoter of rebellion and armed hostilities; and that I am now still in rebellion, and ill-disposed towards the government of the United States. I had requested the Commander, in case he should entertain any charges against

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

me, individually, to let me know them specifically, and to give me opportunity to intrude again upon your time, by a new statement concerning these new points.

The material facts enumerated in this order are not new, They were all known to you last Spring. I stated them to you myself with entire candor in the communication presented to you on or about April 27th, by the Hon. M. Kernan, M. C., of New York. So far were they from making a bad impression concerning me in your mind, that you promptly assured that gentleman you would protect me against further interference.

These are about the same facts on which Gen. Brayman bases this sentence against me and against the Church. The difference arises from his attributing to me different motives.

A man's own word for his interior motives will be valued by each one according to his own judgment of the man's position and character, but it may be corroborated by external facts.

As for my own word, I state distinctly and with full sense of my sacred office, and my responsibility to God, that in altering the prayer after the passage of the Ordinance of Secession, my motive was not to instigate nor promote hostilities, nor the overthrow of any government, violently or peaceably, nor to influence any one's conduct or sentiment with regard to the movement then going on.

I simply acquiesced in a state of things agreeable to the Ordinance, whether wisely or unwisely. There seemed to be a universal acceptance of it, even by those who had before opposed it. All the public authorities then in the exercise of their powers, to the best of my knowledge, had either embraced it with zeal, or regarded themselves constrained to yield to it. Had any individual attempted to oppose resistance, there were no troops to assist him, no court, no United States marshal to protect him.

My rule has always been not to teach my flock their politics; but to take them as I found them in that respect, and to teach them only their religion. Incidentally if I made any allusion to political affairs, it was such as I believe would not give pain to my congregation. On this occasion I simply followed the same rule, and altered the prayer, which in its old form would have excited, not religious devotion, but political animosity.

## Bishop of Natchez

---

I might have introduced a totally different prayer which would have avoided mention of any other government in particular. It is hard for a man to say with certainty what he would have done; but judging from the sentiments which I remember feeling at that time, I sincerely believe I would have done this, if it had occurred to my mind. It is exactly what I did do afterwards, what I am doing now. I dropped all local prayers, so as not to give offense to the absent any more than to the present, and adopted a prayer used over the whole Catholic world, the Litany of the Saints, which contains supplication for all Christian rulers, all Christian people, and for all our benefactors. I made this change while the Confederate military were in undisputed possession of Natchez.

So much for my own word. As for external facts, if I had been an instigator of the movement of secession, I would have declared myself in favor of it, and would have used my influence to bring it about. An instigator will labor particularly before a measure is adopted, so as to aid in determining its adoption. Or, if he begins his instigation later, he will at least after its adoption be warm in his congratulations. He would certainly not be satisfied with making the least possible change in a form of prayer. He would certainly, in his sermons and in private conversations stimulate the people to follow up the work which he was promoting.

Now, whether I ever did these things; whether I ever tried to influence my flock in favor of secession or of war, is a question of fact. I have denied it. If I have been a promoter of hostilities among my flock, the witnesses must be numerous. If I have not been such, simple justice, the justice of war as well as of peace, requires that I be acquitted of the charge.

So much for the past. For the present I deny that I am in rebellion against any government whatsoever. I am not doing any act, nor teaching any doctrine hostile to any government. Nor am I refusing to do anything which a civil or military government has a right to demand of me. I have shown that the directing of the worship which I offer to God is not within the competency of any secular authority, neither in peace nor war.

My demonstration of this simple truth has not been called

## **Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder**

---

in question. The only answer has been that of the strong man against the weak one. "Military orders must be obeyed, not discussed," — an answer which was given in Mobile as well as in Natchez, the same answer which was given by the Roman Emperor to the Theban Legion of Christians, when they refused to join in a worship which he had ordered, and suffered themselves to be put to death, rather than to obey against their conscience.

I am not then in rebellion against any government. With regard to the United States Government, in particular, I have always expressed my cheerful submission to it in all things lawful, according to my condition so far as I live under it and enjoy its protection. If I am charged with doing anything inconsistent with the profession, let the charge be fairly investigated.

As for my being ill-disposed toward the government, the expression is very indefinite. A fair-minded man may see reason for censuring the government which he best loves; and he may see reasons for admiring the government which he most dislikes. In each case he is partly well-disposed and partly ill-disposed. For my part, I do not know of any human government in which I do not approve of some things and disapprove of others. But, if by the word ill-disposed it is meant that I am doing anything or seeking to do anything for the overthrow or disruption of the United States Government, on my conscience, I deny the assertion and demand the proof. Nor can I understand how such a charge could be made, after what I have said of my conduct and that of the priests of the diocese towards the soldiers of the United States Army. If a man's services are any mark that he has no evil disposition, I doubt whether there are in Natchez, even among officers of all grades, three men who have labored more for the United States Army without pay, than we three Catholic clergymen of the Cathedral.

It may seem in bad taste for me to speak again and again of our own doing but justice is more important than taste. Even in war some of the forms for administering justice may be laid aside, but justice itself is never to be disregarded. No military commander will avow himself unjust.

Now the Christian world will judge hereafter, when all these things become known, whether it is just and right that the army

## Bishop of Natchez

---

for which Rev. Basil Elia sacrificed his life sixteen months ago, should now seize and desecrate the Cathedral in which he used to officiate, and drive into exile, as a dangerous man, the Bishop who sent him, and who, since then, often endangered his own life for its soldiers. It is strange encouragement for other priests to serve them, and strange encouragement for your soldiers to give their lives for a government which treats thus Bishop and priests, who hasten to their help when all things earthly fail them.

Taking the words of the order of July 22d, in connection with one of the letters which General Brayman addressed to me July 16th, I suspect that the true ground of our difference is this: that he expects me to make my sacred ministry an active instrument for maintaining the one side or the other during the present deplorable war. This I very respectfully but positively decline to do. I have no appointment and no pay from the civil government, I enjoy its protection, and in return I have given it my spiritual services — as I will continue to do if allowed — but I will not preach politics or war.

If we were to do so, you would lose more than you would gain. For the largest number of the priests of my diocese are within the lines of the Confederate Army; and, if I were to give the example on the one side, your enemies could profit by it on the other. But whether loss or profit, I cannot do it.

I believe it is the practice in Christian countries to leave unmolested, even in the most bitter wars, those ministers of religion who confine themselves to their religious occupations. Each of the belligerents would, of course, be glad to have their active support, but each finds its true interest in leaving them free, and even facilitating their ministrations among both friends and enemies.

Preceding Commanders, at Natchez, treated me in this spirit. They never had cause to regret it, and the United States never lost anything, either in authority or respect, either among friends or enemies, by the fair view which they took of the position of clergymen, who avoid politics and attend to souls.

I have the honor to remain, respected sir, with all consideration,

Your servant in Christ,

WILLIAM HENRY ELDER,

VIDALIA, LA., July 30th, 1864.

*Bishop of Natchez.*

## **Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder**

This communication to the secretary of war was sent to Rev. John Early, S. J., of Georgetown College, to be given by him to Hon. F. Kernan. In the meantime Bishop Elder remained at Vidalia. Father Early replied as follows on the 8th of August, 1864. His reply was sent to Vicar General Father Grigon:

*Very Reverend and Dear Sir,* — Your letter and the enclosed reached me long after the departure of Mr. Kernan. I entrusted the matter to my esteemed friend Colonel Hardie, and am glad to inform your reverence that through his influence an order has been sent to Major General Canby, commanding the department of the Mississippi to forbid his subordinate to interfere with the rights of Catholics in your diocese. The order was sent on last Saturday by the Assistant Secretary of War.

Please present me kindly to your good Bishop, and accept for yourself the best wishes and cordial regard of,

Yours most truly,

(Signed) JOHN EARLY, S. J.

VERY REVEREND M. F. GRIGON, V. G.

P.S. — You will be glad to hear that the department has issued an order for the restoration of the Sisters' House at Vicksburg.

Yours again,

(Signed) JOHN EARLY, S. J.

Accordingly, on August 12th, after Bishop Elder had been in Vidalia for seventeen days, the following order was issued:

SPECIAL ORDER, No. 31.

HEADQUARTERS U. S. FORCES, NATCHEZ, MISSISSIPPI,

August 12, 1864.

(Extract)

1. Military authority having been for the time vindicated, so much of special order, No. 11, as requires Reverend William Henry Elder, Bishop of Natchez, to remain within military lines of

## Bishop of Natchez

---

Vidalia, La., is suspended, and he may return to his home and duties until the pleasure of the War Department be known in his case.

And as all solemn appeals to the Supreme Being, not proceeding from honest hearts and willing minds, are necessarily offensive to Him and subversive of sound morality, so much of special order, No. 31, June 18th, 1864, as requires public prayers to be pronounced in behalf of the President of the United States and the Union, is suspended until further orders; leaving all persons conducting worship at liberty to manifest such measure of hostility as they may feel, against the government and the union of these States, and their sympathy with the rebellion, by omitting such supplications, if so minded.

By order of

(Signed) BRIG. GEN. M. BRAYMAN.

J. H. ODLIN, *Asst. Adj. Gen.*

Notwithstanding the dark forebodings of General Brayman, Bishop Elder did not "manifest hostility to the government" nor "sympathy with the rebellion," but quietly continued to do as much good as he could among the people of Mississippi. No anger or resentment remained in his heart against the men who had persecuted him.

Amid the acclamations of the whole city of Natchez, and the ringing of joy bells, he was received in his Cathedral.

In its sanctuary a memorial prie-dieu is thus inscribed:

"From the ladies of the congregation, in gratitude for Bishop Elder's release from military imprisonment, August 12th, 1864."

The following touchingly beautiful letter lays bare the filial heart of the Bishop:

NATCHEZ, March 13, 1866.

TO HIS FATHER:

It has been so long since I wrote to you, or any of the family in Baltimore, that I fear you will feel hurt at my silence.

[ 59 ]

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

I have again been absent a good deal since Christmas, and I have also been expecting every week to fix in my own mind the time when I might expect the happiness of paying you a visit. I have been looking to it now since last fall — and still it is like the end of the rainbow.

I shall try to do it as soon as I can after Easter; but I cannot now say how soon. We are compelled to go to work to put up two considerable buildings, one for our schoolhouse and one for a part of our Boys' Asylum. I expected to get them started in the beginning of this month, but we cannot yet obtain even the materials to begin with. I shall certainly hasten it as much as possible, both for the sake of the visit and for the sake of the poor children, the orphans especially, who have a wretched place to sleep in for warm weather.

If I can get them fairly started, it will not be necessary for me to wait for their completion.

It is a long time now since I heard directly from Baltimore. Good Sister Helena wrote me the last letter from Maryland. I have been expecting a letter from Julie, but it is not yet come.

You have, no doubt, heard from New Orleans that I was there last month. I wanted to stop also at Bro. John's, but the irregularity of the boats along the Lake, detained me a week beyond my appointed time. I left his daughter Celeste and Charley's Theresa both very happy at the convent of St. Joseph, Bay St. Louis.

We are getting through Lent quietly enough, if we can only get through this life peaceably without sin and reach the joyful Easter that lies beyond! And so we shall do, if only we continue faithful to the end, for our Lord has paid a great price for our souls and He will not suffer them to be lost except of our own malice. Oh! how consoling those simple words of the Angels, "Peace to men of good will." How much there is in them! What strength — for it is not peace to men of great intellects or of mighty works, not even peace to men of innocence, or of great penance, but simply to men of *good will*, who have now the will to please God, the will or the wish that they had never sinned, the will now to do God's will for the rest of their lives, the will to bear as patiently as they can whatever crosses, great or little, God puts

## Bishop of Natchez

---

upon them. Even though we seem to have but little love in our hearts, yet if only we have the good will to love more there is peace for us, the peace of God, the peace without end and without measure, the peace that surpasseth all understanding, and no one can rob us of it. We cannot go over our lives and make them better than they were, but we can have the good will for it and that is enough. How cheaply we can purchase Heaven, because the great price has been already paid. May we all study over that price — that Precious Blood — that Cross on which it was shed for us; may this Passion Time and this Holy Week sink deep into our hearts. And, my dear Father, if even our enemy tempts you to some uneasiness, calling to your mind some offence of God or some unfaithfulness to His Grace, think how much more wonderful and merciful it has been that by His Passion and Cross, He preserved you from such a multitude of sins into which you would have fallen, if He had not loved you so tenderly and watched over you so carefully.

And continue, my dear Father, to pray for us, your poor children, and to bless us every day. The blessing of Jacob on his twelve sons was the forerunner of God's great works in their behalf, and the blessing of a Christian Father — the lifting of your hands which have set us such an example of good works — the words from your lips which have been so many times sanctified by the receiving of Our Divine Lord Himself — they have more power with God than any of us can understand now. But I hope the day will come when we shall all understand it — when, with God's mercy, if we are faithful we shall be reunited around you and our dear Mother — part of the mighty family which shall be gathered around the Blessed Mother of all, and at her feet and those of her Adorable Son. Pray especially for me and bless me — for I have indeed special need of it — not for bearing afflictions, but for discharging faithfully the tremendous responsibilities that God has laid upon me. He will indeed give abundant graces for discharging them, but even the abundance of His grace increases the rigor of the account to be demanded.

Next Thursday week will be my birthday (22d) and Easter Wednesday, my Baptismal day, and if God gives me life and strength to offer the Divine Sacrifice on those days, it shall be

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

offered both in thanksgiving to Him for the favors of my life, and thanksgiving and prayer for you and Mother, to whom I owe them all under God, and for my good Brothers and Sisters, to whose example and kindness, I owe so much; and tell Edward he has an especially big share among them all.

If it is not convenient for you to write, please ask some of the children or grand-children, or great-grand-children (Julie the younger, for example) to write me how you all are. Our spring seems to be opening here. The peach trees have been blossoming for two weeks — and our boys at the Asylum have their potatoes springing up; and every morning I hear our mocking-bird in our yard.

Good bye, my dear Father, with love and thankfulness,

Your own son,

WILLIAM HENRY,

*Bishop of Natchez.*

The following letters will prove both illuminating and interesting to the general reader.

STEAMER MAGNOLIA, April 24, 1866.

*My dear Sister and Godmother,* — Present my kind and respectful regards to your new Mother, with my congratulations for the Community, and for herself if she will accept them. I can wish her nothing better than to imitate and equal her holy predecessor, which, though she may believe it to be beyond her reach, yet is not beyond the reach and the will of the Holy Ghost.

To-day is the Feast of St. Fidelis of Sigmaringen, first Martyr of the Propaganda. I am not able to celebrate Mass. Pray for your godson, that though not imitating his martyrdom as is not likely, he may strive to imitate at a distance his fidelity.

Ask Sister Fanny to offer at least one good Hail Mary for the little boy that used to visit her in Saratoga Street.

You never say much about yourself in your letters, and after all it is very wise, my dear sister, for us not to be too much taken up even with the salvation of our own souls. Do not be scandalized at a Bishop saying this. To be taken up with a thing means

## Bishop of Natchez

---

to be so absorbed in it, as not to give due attention to other things, and not unfrequently anxiety about our souls draws off our attention and love from God, His Attributes, His Glory, and His Works. This life is an apprenticeship for the next, and the great occupation of the next will be not to study our souls, but to contemplate and glorify God, and thank Him not only for His Goodness to us, but for His Goodness and Glory in Himself. "We thank Thee for Thy Great Glory." This seems more a subject of praise than of thanks, but there is a great meaning in it. Even in our thanks we must give more attention to God and less to ourselves. Pray for your poor godson that he may practice what he recommends.

WILLIAM HENRY,  
*Bishop of Natchez.*

LOUVAIN, BELGIUM, September 20, 1867.

*My dear Sister and Godmother,* — I believe I wrote to father from Germany. I do not remember the date. I intended his letter for all of you. It was soon after that, I think, that I was in Cologne, where I visited the relics of St. Ursula and her crowds of virgins. There was a very interesting article written by Cardinal Wiseman not long before his death, published in the *Catholic World*, concerning the authenticity of that history as to its substance. He shows that just at that period, the Christians in England, especially the women, were often compelled to flee in great numbers from the pagan barbarians invading the island, that Cologne was the nearest town on the Continent, large and fortified so as to protect them. Then just at the time that their martyrdom is said to have occurred, there was an immense army of Huns that passed by Cologne, and it is remarkable that many arrows were found among the relics, and the Huns were the only ones who made use of arrows. But all that is found in the book that I saw were the relics. Near the door of the Church is what they call the Golden Chamber; a room of some twenty feet square with ornamented shelves around three sides, almost up to the ceiling. All these shelves are occupied with relics, chiefly the skulls. Many of these are in reliquaries in the form of busts, some silver and some copper gilt. Against the fourth wall of

## **Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder**

---

the room other bones are placed in symmetrical figures. On the tables around, below the shelves, are also a number of relics in costly and beautiful reliquaries. Some of the skulls bear the marks of the blows given. Around the Church are a number of tombs said to be filled likewise with relics; and around the Sanctuary, as also in some other parts of the Church, there are grated windows in the walls through which are to be seen numbers of bones, apparently deposited in the wall. All these relics, answering they say to about 1800 counted, besides others broken too much, not opened, — were found on the spot where the Church is built. And there is a slab in the wall of the choir, proved to be really as old as it professes to be, about one hundred and fifty years later than the martyrdom, testifying that the Church was rebuilt in consequence of Divine admonitions to do honor to those Relics. In a side Chapel is a very beautiful tomb representing St. Ursula stretched in death with a dove at her feet. Over the Altar is a painting representing the Bishop offering Mass in that Chapel, and a dove descending and alighting on the spot where the tomb is now. The tradition is that it was in this manner the precise spot where St. Ursula was buried, was pointed out to the Bishop. Cologne seems to be the City of Relics. In another Church — of St. Gereon — are the relics of him and his companions of the Theban Legion, — who were martyred there at the same time that St. Maurice and the rest of the Legion were martyred in Switzerland. These relics likewise were preserved in apartments within the walls of the Sanctuary, and are partially seen through grated windows.

Many other sacred things and places I have seen as I moved about, so many indeed that they crowd one another out of my memory. I tried to profit by them at the moment by as fervent a prayer as I could make for myself and for all for whom I ought to pray. You and all your sisters, not only hold a large place among them, but often I remember you individually as indeed I was bound to do: — and I still count on your continued prayers both for me and my Diocese, that I may succeed in getting some more priests.

WILLIAM HENRY,  
*Bishop of Natchez.*

## Bishop of Natchez

---

SOUTHAMPTON, ENGLAND, September 5th, 1870.

*My dear Sister and Godmother,* — Providence has helped me. After spending two weeks in France, every day afraid that the war troubles might stop traveling and keep me there, I got out safely and easily, and when I landed here I heard of the surrender of the Emperor and the army, and the proclamation of the Republic.

Poor, good people of France! They deserve our most fervent prayers. God grant that after their chastisement they may be delivered and comforted. I was very much edified with the faith and resignation expressed by the good Catholics, together with their generous good will to fight and suffer for the liberation of their country. Fr. Etienne told me there was a much greater manifestation than ever before of faith and religion among the soldiers. When I was at Rodez there were six hundred soldiers in the Seminary and two hundred in the Brothers' College, and I was told that numbers of them were going to Confession, receiving the Scapulars, hearing Mass, visiting the Blessed Sacrament, etc. The spirit of religion is greater than in the other wars. And for the rest of the people, not soldiers, they are crowding to the Churches, making Novenas, etc.

Friday I spent in Rouen, and visited among other places the Sanctuary of Notre Dame de Bon Secours, on the hill a mile from town. They told me that the previous Friday the Cardinal Archbishop had conducted a pilgrimage to the Sanctuary, to offer prayers for France, and more than thirty thousand faithful joined in the pilgrimage.

Here at Southampton I am staying with Rev. Fr. Mount, who shows the greatest kindness and hospitality to your religious sisters, when they come here to wait for the steamers going to India and sometimes to America. In sight from my window, is the historic New Forest where King William Rufus, while hunting was shot by Sir Walter Tyrol, and still nearer is the beach where King Canute took his seat and commanded the waters not to come closer, and when they came on and rolled over his feet, he gave a good lecture to his courtiers for having flattered him that he was ruler of all things.

But the dearest of all places that I have visited is the Holy

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

House of Loretto, where Our Divine Lord became man for us. I had the happiness of celebrating Mass there twice, on Sunday the 14th of August, and on the Assumption itself. But I can tell about this better than I can write. I hope to pay you a short call before I go to Mississippi. Good Sister Matilda, I will not see again in this world. I offered the Holy Sacrifice for her as soon as I heard of her departure. Continue your prayers for your brother and Godson,

WILLIAM HENRY,  
*Bishop of Natchez.*

The following letter was written on board of steamboat, while making an Episcopal visitation.

HARD TIMES, LOUISIANA, February 1, 1871.

*My dear Sister and Godmother,*—I do not know how to begin making new excuses. I certainly owed it to you and Mother Euphemia and all your excellent sisters and to the Reverend Fathers, all of whom overloaded me with kindness, to write immediately after my safe arrival at Natchez in October.

I do not claim to justify my omission, but it may diminish it, to tell you that I have omitted a great deal of correspondence that I owed, because of the accumulation of business in a year's absence. And then, two days after Christmas I left home to make a part of my visitation, and in that I have been kept so continually occupied, that I have now, some twenty-three letters of business dated over two weeks ago, and not yet answered.

But I'll take a little holiday this morning, before I begin work and enjoy a little word with you. I left Vicksburg last night, or this morning after midnight, and we have got as far as Hard Times Landing. We expect to reach Natchez some time this evening. Of course you have heard of your sisters at Natchez much later accounts than I can give. Indeed, I have not heard from them since I left them. On the Children's Christmas festival I wrote to Sister Mary Thomas, but she is so busy with the Fair that she has not written to me. She is indeed full of charity and hard work. May God long preserve her for us. I cannot sufficiently thank Father Burland and Mother for giving us at Natchez the benefit of her

## Bishop of Natchez

---

zeal. In all our weakness and poverty, I think the Asylum might have melted away before now, or dwindled down to very little, and left in ignorance and sin more than half the young girls whom she has saved.

I received your packet of scapulars for me, and letters for Sister Mary Thomas, and I beg you to thank the dear sisters for their great goodness in making all those beautiful things with their own hands. Some of them I can keep for myself, and those that I give away are a means of very great good. Out on my visitations, when I wish to encourage either a new convert or some one who is making especial efforts to serve God in their own souls, or in teaching others, or in doing anything else good, one of those scapulars or a handsomely decorated Agnus Dei, or other object of devotion, gives them a great deal of pleasure and new fervor.

We have just been experiencing the reality of a word of the Holy Father to Archbishop Perché of New Orleans, when he gave him the Pallium, the Sunday before Christmas. He said: "He was suffering but the Church was gaining by it, and he thanked God for all His dispensations." We have been giving the Jubilee again. The Catholics have come with renewed fervor. A number of old indifferents have aroused themselves, and the Protestants have been asking to *hear more about the Pope*. At Jackson the leading lawyers and a number of the Legislators asked me to give them a lecture about the Pope, and they gave the Hall of Legislature to deliver it in. At Vicksburg two different bodies, one Catholic and the other Protestant, asked me to repeat it, and they got the Court House. At both places it rained, but the rooms were filled, and at Vicksburg I repeated it again Sunday night, in Church, and that was crowded. I was not able to prepare anything very good, but the subject itself drew them and kept them interested. Everybody hears how the Pope is treated, and everybody wants to know what is the meaning of his Temporal Dominion, and how the question stands between him and his enemies.

To look at the Vicar of Our Lord and take an interest in him is the first step towards taking an interest in Our Lord Himself. So it is a time of grace, and, therefore, a time for you to

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

pray hard, first for Catholics that we may use the blessings God gives us through His Vicar; and then for non-Catholics that they may know them and use them too, and perhaps most of all, for us Bishops and Priests on whom is the terrible responsibility of teaching by word and example, and helping in every way those immortal souls. Continue, then, your prayers for your poor godson. Thankful remembrance to all. My health is excellent.

Yours in Christ,

WILLIAM HENRY.

*Bishop of Natchez.*

In this charming letter to a very young child he tells the legend connected with Saint Lawrence's burial, in order to convey a lesson of brotherly affection:

NATCHEZ, August 10, 1873.

*My dear little J* — Your wonderful letter of May the 28th was received, of course a good while ago. Did you think Uncle Bishop would never answer it? You would not like brother J. to be such a Bishop as not to answer your letters. But I have been traveling a good deal, and I had to leave some grown persons wait for answers to their letters.

If B. was a great boy for asking you to write, you are a greater girl for doing it so well. I hope you and J. will both grow up to be great and good: and always try to please one another all you can. When brothers and sisters love one another and help one another, they keep happy together, and God sends them very great blessings. In the office and Mass to-day we read about St. Lawrence, how much he loved St. Sixtus, the Pope. When he saw them taking the Pope to be put to death, he ran after him crying, not because the Pope was going to die, but because he could not also die with him. But the Pope told him not to be uneasy, he should die likewise in three days. "Only," he said, "because I am an old man, God lets them put me to death at once without any pain, but you are a young man and God wants to give you an opportunity to suffer a great deal, so that you may show these wicked people how little you care for their torments, and then you will have a more glorious reward in heaven. Now,

## Bishop of Natchez

---

ask Mother to find in the Lives of the Saints, how he suffered and died. But probably she knows all about it without looking for it. There are seven churches of St. Lawrence in Rome. But his grandest Church, where he is buried, is outside the city. The people all say it was because of his prayers, that the pagans of Rome became Christians soon after. He was a deacon. And they brought from Jerusalem the body of St. Stephen the Deacon to bury in the same tomb with St. Lawrence, and they say that when they opened the tomb, the body of St. Lawrence moved itself to one side to make room for St. Stephen. I have often seen the big tomb where they lie together. So St. Lawrence not only loved the Pope whom he knew, but he loved St. Stephen whom he had never seen on earth; though of course he sees him all the time in heaven. So you and J. must love one another, and you must love all your brothers and sisters, and always be ready to make room for them and try to please them and give them the best of everything.

In 1874 Bishop Elder consecrated the Natchez Diocese to the Sacred Heart, and, making the occasion one of drawing a soul away from self-inspection which was depressing her mind, he wrote the following letter, whose piety is so edifying that it will help all who read it.

You know already that the 22d of March is my birthday, and being Passion Sunday it is the anniversary of my ordination to the Priesthood. But more than that it is the time for consecrating the whole diocese to the Sacred Heart. When I give my diocese and myself to that Abyss of Love I want you to unite yourself with us, with all your joys and pains, with all the virtues He has enabled you to practice, and with all the sins you have committed to wound His Heart, with all your hopes and all your terrors; throw them all into that Divine furnace that there the bad may be consumed and the good purified and heated, until He is pleased with it.

Our Novena will end on the 29th. That was a day of great happiness in celebrating my first Mass. It will also be Palm Sunday and I have been told that was the day of my baptism

## **Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder**

---

(April 14th), and I beg you to end the Novena by offering Holy Communion for me.

Now we have entered into a partnership, and you must not wrong me now by leaving out any of your share, and I promise, if God gives me life, to be faithful in discharging mine. Say the beautiful ejaculation: "O Heart of Jesus, my only Love, make my poor life conducive to Thy Glory, to the edification of my neighbor, and the salvation of my soul."

When you have finished the Novena, you will be able to shed tears of thankfulness during the solemnities of Holy Week, and then share in the joys of Easter. Unless perhaps Our Lord has something better for you and keeps you still suffering on your cross, so that your joys may be multiplied when you see Him face to face.

When the yellow fever, the terrible scourge of 1878, broke out in deadly virulence in Mississippi, Bishop Elder worked valiantly in Natchez in place of the priests whom he sent to Vicksburg; and finally going there himself, when his overworked priests were falling fast along the line of duty. The flock in Natchez feared for their Shepherd's life, as well they might, and soon they heard he had contracted the dread disease and was even reported to be dying. Then it was that the Catholic heart poured itself out in prayer for its cherished Bishop.

The doors of the Cathedral were kept open, even to a late hour of the night, and his sorrowing people, in humble supplication, promised, — if God would spare their city from the plague, and their Bishop from the grasp of death, — they would set apart one day every year, to be kept in thanksgiving for God's great mercy.<sup>1</sup> Their prayers were granted. Natchez had

<sup>1</sup>This day, promised by the Catholics of Natchez as one of thanksgiving for Bishop Elder's recovery and their city's immunity from the plague, is still observed in that city.

## Bishop of Natchez

---

not a case of yellow fever, although the plague was devastating the country far and wide; and their Bishop who had "almost touched the door between forever — and no more" was spared to them for a few short years. They little dreamed that his life had been prolonged only to cheer and bless and guide another flock; that in God's mysterious Providence he was called to be the overburdened Shepherd of another fold.

He had given them twenty-three years of loving care; and in their desolation at his loss, they passionately claimed that when death should call him hence, they would have the right to ask of Cincinnati that he be brought back to Natchez and laid to rest in his own old Cathedral. It was ordained otherwise. His labors in Cincinnati extended over twenty-four years; and love for him there had steadily grown and strengthened until it fully equaled that of his Natchez people; and it was only right and just and natural that there where he had fallen at his post of duty, he should sleep, as a soldier sleeps, upon the field of battle.

His journeys among the scattered members of his flock are recalled by the following, written while on board a steamboat on the Mississippi River:

STEAMER TO NATCHEZ, December 20, 1879.

*Dear S—*, — Four weeks rambling through the piney woods, — without being inside of a Church, except one Methodist meeting-house. Good kind people in there. I feel strange coming out among common folks again. Rough life, but very edifying for simplicity and good sense. I confirmed about fifty converts, others ripening for conversion. Ignorant of the faith, but with honest hearts and willing to learn. I would like to spend many months among them, and go back again as often as I could.

Just hurrying for Christmas, absent since August 12th.

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

While still Bishop of Natchez and not dreaming he would ever be called to the afflicted Archdiocese of Cincinnati, Bishop Elder wrote the following appeal to his own clergy, recommending as a special work the relief of the difficulties of the generous Archbishop Purcell.

After recounting the generous aid given to Mississippi people by the Ohio prelate during the epidemic of 1878, the Bishop wrote:

“And suffer me to add a personal consideration. In my early youth, the Archbishop of Cincinnati, when President of the Mountain College in Maryland, was the first to receive me at the college door. He was a tender father to me during all my stay at the College; and ever since, his fatherly kindness has never failed me. He has encouraged me with his counsels, he has authorized me frequently to solicit help for our Churches and Asylums; and he has educated priests for us without any expense to our diocese.

“Then by all these considerations of religion, gratitude, and personal affection, I recommend the matter to your charity. I would be happy and would regard it as a favor to me personally, if each one would contribute a dollar or more to this purpose.”

In less than a year after this letter was written, the Bishop of Natchez was ordered by Rome to take upon his shoulders the heavy burden which he bewailed as having fallen upon his venerable friend.





### Part Third — The Archbishop of Cincinnati

**T**HERE was no yellow fever in Natchez in 1878, but there was a fever of unrest and anxiety in regard to Bishop Elder.

At this time his fatherly heart was racked with anguish because orders came for him to take up the heavy cross of the Cincinnati Archdiocese, and leave the happy home his people had made for him in Natchez. It almost broke his heart to give sorrow where he longed only to bestow peace and comfort.

He well understood what awaited him in his new field of labor. He might well hesitate at the terrible burden about to be laid upon him, but heavier yet was the pain he would inflict upon his people, and greater was the sacrifice to lay down his pastoral staff in Natchez than to assume the rugged crozier of Cincinnati.

Bishop Jansens, speaking later of his work as successor of Bishop Elder in Mississippi, said he had been left "a bed of roses." All was peaceful, priests were models of zeal and holiness, people were fervent and faithful, no debts hung over the Church, it being a rule of Bishop Elder that no priest could contract obligations beyond the sum of two hundred dollars.

And he must turn from all this — to what? We quote the answer from Archbishop Keane's own eloquent words:

"Disaster had fallen on the Church in Cincinnati — financial disaster such as to appall the stoutest hearts and fill them

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

with a sense of despair. Thousands of the honest and trusting poor were being sucked down into the whirlpool, and they reached their hands in anguished supplications to their chief pastor and clung to his garments that they might not sink — nay, cried out in their despair whether rightly or wrongly, that the responsibility rested mainly on him, and that he must save them. No wonder that their broken-hearted shepherd, when he came to understand, even partially the nature and magnitude of the disaster, threw up his hands in powerlessness and uttered that wail which touched every heart throughout the land. In such a tempest, who could be asked to take the helm? Who could be induced to accept the trust? The most worldly-wise stood hopeless, paralyzed. No one could meet the emergency but a man of God, one who in the spirit and the name and the power of Christ Himself could command the winds and waves and bring the calm."

Bishop Elder had previously been appointed Co-adjutor to the Most Reverend Archbishop Allemany of San Francisco; but respectfully representing to the Holy See the distressed condition of the Natchez diocese, just recovering from the horrors of the Civil War, and later devastated by the plague of yellow fever, he humbly asked permission to remain with his people, as he understood their needs and all depended upon him to relieve them. He did not refuse, he simply pleaded for his people's sake to be allowed to help them. San Francisco was an alluring See, rich and prosperous, and the Holy Father had appointed him to it, as a mark of his admiration for the Bishop's virtues. The release from new dignities was granted; but only two years elapsed when came the call to Cincinnati. Archbishop Purcell had been Professor at Mt. St. Mary's College when William Henry Elder entered that institution. He knew him as the faithful student, the earnest holy Seminarian, and he had

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

followed his career as zealous priest and self-sacrificing Bishop. It is therefore of belief, that the Venerable Archbishop's supplications confirmed the Holy Father in his determination to send Bishop Elder to Cincinnati, along a pathway filled with thorns and strewn with almost insurmountable difficulties.

It required the courage of a martyr and the heroism of a saint to accept the Co-adjutorship of Cincinnati; but he yielded in humble submission, took up his cross, laid down his rose-twined scepter — and entered into a world of strife, dissension, even hatred, into an arena of ill-will, of cold suspicion, of fierce demands, and persistent reproaches.

A short while after his entrance into his new See, a visitor from New Orleans, who had known him long and well, was seated in his library, and speaking of many things remarked: — "Bishop, what a contrast this place must be to your peaceful home in Natchez." No answer being given the visitor raised his eyes to the Bishop's face, and saw a few tears trickling down his cheeks, but immediately overcoming the emotion caused by those reminiscent words, the Bishop exclaimed tenderly: — "Ah, but the religious Orders are beautiful!"

To quote again from Archbishop Keane: —

"Bishop Elder laid no claim to special financial skill; but he was filled with the Spirit of Christ, he would meet the disaster just as Christ would meet it; among the frenzied sufferers he would be just what Christ Himself would be. That was the only solution adequate to the vastness of the evil. Bankers and lawyers might do, and would assuredly do, all that prudence and ingenuity could devise, but for the controlling of the situation naught but the power of Christ could suffice."

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

With a debt of \$4,000,000, due depositors who were fiercely clamoring for their life-savings; with suits in court which aimed at every school, church, and asylum in Cincinnati; with a clergy dismayed and discouraged by the intricacies of the law in the hands of the assignees; and with a laity having no part in the terrible debt, yet feeling it an unjust burden, the times were dark and ominous. Throngs of poor people crowded his court yard, even threatening violence unless their money was paid to them. Bishop Elder moved among them with the gentle word, the kindly smile, the hopeful assurance that God would give him help so he could help them. His own clergy begged him not to see the people, in this their delirium of fear and hate, but he paid no heed to their advice. To the most distressed he gave from his own pocket, and continued to do so until the clamor was partly allayed, and the depositors recognized that God had sent them a friend in need, a friend in deed. The money collected, wherever due, from church property, went into the hands of the assignee, and could only be distributed *pro rata*. The Bishop's salary, and all he received from sympathetic friends, passed into the hands of those whose case appealed most forcibly to his sense of justice and charity; and thus by love and prayer he brought calmness into the hearts of many, and awakened perfect confidence in his efforts and methods, in the minds of all. We quote again from Archbishop Keane:—

“We all expected to see him break under the strain, but no; we always found in him the same sweet, gentle smile; the same deep, calm strength, the same unruffled composure. We could but ask, is it that he does not comprehend the magnitude

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

of the evil? Ah, it was not that; he comprehended it fully enough. It was now above all, he was gathering strength, guidance, and consolation from the lesson taught him by St. Paul on the day of his ordination. It was in the spirit of the man of God that he rose to the level of the situation. It was by the strength of a soul emptied of all earthly desires and filled with justice and godliness, faith, charity, patience, and mildness that he was, day by day, upheld under the crushing load.

"It was not the judgments of men that guided him, but the unceasing vision of the coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Eternal Judge."

The Purcell Debt is often not clearly understood. This manly letter of Archbishop Elder clears away all misconceptions, and shows how the Catholics of Cincinnati were not responsible for its payment.

### TO THE CATHOLIC CLERGY AND LAITY OF THE DIOCESE OF CINCINNATI

*Beloved Brethren*, — For some weeks past I have been desirous to address you, and through you, all persons who feel interested directly or indirectly, concerning the debts of the late Very Reverend Edward Purcell, and the claims against my venerable predecessor, the most Reverend Archbishop Purcell.

More than once I have set forth to you my attitude in regard to them. I think it well for me now to recall to your minds some of the things I wrote on those occasions, and to add some others opportune to the present circumstances.

Not long ago I was asked by several persons the truth of the report that Our Holy Father, the Sovereign Pontiff, had given me orders to pay off those claims in a certain specified time. I regard it as not right for public journalists to put forth these sensational reports on the word of irresponsible persons. There are too many poor people deeply interested in this matter to have their hopes and feelings trifled with. No such order has been given to me, nor any intimation which could furnish ground for that report. But I am not sorry to notice it, as giving me an occasion to say, what most of you know without my saying

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

it, that it would not require an order from the Holy Father to make me pay these claims. I would be too happy to pay them at any cost or sacrifice. If I know myself I do say and mean it while I say it, that I would be glad to lay down my life if thereby I could obtain their payment, and in this I pretend to no extraordinary merits. There is not a Bishop in the country who would not have the same disposition if he occupied my place.

I say, moreover, that if it were right that the Churches and other religious institutions in the diocese should be sold for those claims, I would not wait for any suit at law to sell them all and begin again in rented halls. And all the priests of the diocese would cheerfully face the labors and bear the privations that would follow. They would glory to walk in the footsteps of the Apostolic men who first sacrificed themselves in the missions of Ohio, particularly of the venerable Archbishop who labored and suffered here for half a century.

But generous sentiments do not give a man the right to sacrifice what belongs to others. These churches, schools, and asylums do not belong to me as they did not belong to the late Archbishop. They were built or bought with the money of the people, to serve the highest possible interests of themselves and their children and future generations for all time to come. They have been devoted to saving men's souls from sin, sanctifying them with God's word and with His Sacraments, and putting within their reach the boundless wealth and happiness of heaven. Neither the Archbishop nor the congregations themselves have any right to divert these institutions from their purpose. For even the present congregations have been only in part contributors. A very large — by far the largest part, is come to us by persons no longer living, and from charitable friends in other places, even in distant countries. These made their donations for the purpose of establishing works of religion, education, and charity. If we, under any impulse of veneration for the late Archbishop, or of generosity for the suffering creditors, should, of our own authority dispose of this property to satisfy these claims, we would do injustice to the donors and deep wrong to all the persons whom the donors intended to benefit. We would rob souls of the blessings of religion, despoil the ignorant

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

of the means of education and strip the orphans and the other destitutes of food and shelter, for which this property has been intrusted to our administration. We have no right to be generous at other people's expense, and least of all, at the expense of the poor and helpless. Moreover, not a few of these Churches, schools, etc., are already pledged, some under regular legal mortgages, and some under informal promises as securities to repay money borrowed for the building or improving them.

If, indeed, these were debts of the diocese or church; if these institutions had been established with the money of Father Edward Purcell, then it would be a question not of generosity, but of justice. We would have no right to shelter the orphan nor do any other good work with money unjustly withheld from the owners. If we could not repay, we should be bound to surrender the property. And therefore, I have said that Bishops and priests and I may add, all good Catholics with them, would not wait for a suit at law, to induce them to surrender all church property and begin again from the foundation, if this property were the fruit of borrowed money which they could not otherwise repay.

Whatever churches and institutions were found to be indebted to the Archbishop or his brother, either have returned their loans or they are laboring and economizing to return them in full. If possibly, any one of them should not eventually succeed, it will be given up for sale even without a decree of court. But the truth is, that the debt is not of the diocese or church; because the money intrusted to Very Reverend Edward Purcell was not loaned to him for religious purposes; the owners brought it to him for their own convenience and security to take care of it for them, when they were afraid to trust it with the banks and merchants, and still more afraid to keep it in their houses. A very sensible friend has suggested an appropriate illustration. If the Governor of the State, holding office for a long succession of terms, were, during that time, to carry on a private savings bank commanding great confidence on account of his personal reputation enhanced by the people's regard for his high position, and he should die unable to repay the depositors, who would pretend that the State and the county property should be held liable for his debts?

Very Reverend Edward Purcell was accustomed to receive

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

deposits and give acknowledgements for them, with promise of interest at six per cent per annum. When the interest was not drawn, it was added to the deposit so that on a very large amount he was allowing compound interest. To earn the interest he commonly loaned out the money to men on their individual note, with no security but their own name, and great sums of money were never repaid to him.

At the time of his assignment, he had on hand notes of this kind, not collected, amounting to nearly 500,000. Perhaps more were found afterwards. Many of them were twenty years old, and they represented deposits on which he had been paying 12 percent interest and on much of it compound interest. Interest at 6 per cent almost doubles the principal in 16 years, and if compounded it more than doubles in twelve years. I state these facts to show both that the money was not borrowed by Father Edward for the use of the Church, but deposited by the owners for safe keeping and for interest, and also, that it was not applied to Church purposes.

Notwithstanding all this, the priests of the diocese and the Catholic people, and I believe a considerable number of generous souls who are not Catholic, unite with me in desiring to do what they can toward extinguishing or lessening these claims against the late Archbishop. They desire it for the honor of that venerable patriarch, in admiration of his half century of self-sacrifices in behalf of religion, education and charity, and in acknowledgement of our indebtedness to him for so many works whose fruit our generation is reaping.

They desire it, too, in their charity toward the many poor people who are suffering deeply for the want of their money — money which they had saved up by years of labor and self-denial, to be their support in sickness or old age.

Something has been done for the most destitute among them. The great bazaar that was held in Cincinnati seven years ago and which was so liberally favored by the people both of the city and elsewhere produced, I am told, \$20,000, which was distributed without delay. Besides that, on the occasion of the consecration of the New York Cathedral, our Archbishop made an appeal to the charity of the Prelates and the clergy assembled

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

there. A number of them responded liberally. Contributions were made, which the donors placed in the keeping of a committee appointed by themselves, residing in the East. This committee was directed, I understand, to apply the amount at such times and in such sums as they judged most in accordance with the wishes of the contributors. Under this direction they have been sending remittances to me with instructions to distribute the money among the most destitute, marking the amounts on their notes, to the credit of the Archbishop. With this help we have been relieving a large number of the cases which seemed to be of greatest distress. The whole amount of this fund distributed up to the present date is \$30,091.26. It has been my purpose to call upon the Catholics of this diocese and to invite all other persons, who may be so disposed, to unite in a serious effort for extinguishing or lessening those claims. The chief obstacle has been that many are unwilling to contribute as long as the Churches are involved in this suit-at-law. They argue that if this suit should be decided against the Churches, they should have to tax themselves to the uttermost to buy them in or build new ones. Since they do not believe that the creditors have a claim of justice against them, they are not willing to make charitable donations now to the same persons, to whom they may possibly have to pay large sums again to save the Churches. This consideration induced me to postpone making any call upon them. But it was obvious that every year of postponement was injuring the prospects of success, because the lapse of time was lessening the interest that the people felt, and it has continued longer the distress of the suffering creditors. In view of this, after the decision of the Court, that the Churches were not liable for the Archbishop's debts, I addressed a letter to the Assignee, telling him that in case he should judge it consistent with his duty to accept the decision without appealing to the Supreme Court, this would remove the cause of my delay; and I would proceed at once to the work of collecting all I could for the benefit of the creditors. He told me orally that in the circumstances he judged it necessary to enter an appeal. Then I requested him to keep my letter on file, and if in any future stage he should deliberate about dropping the appeal, he would have

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

the letter on hand for the consideration of the attorneys and the creditors.

The deplorable loss, made known last winter, of the money collected by the late assignee, made me still more desirous of hastening the time of undertaking our collection. I believe that we have devised a way by which to overcome the obstacle which has caused our delay. It is not yet sufficiently matured for me to say more about it now. In our Diocesan Synod which is to be held this month, I hope to complete the arrangements for carrying it into effect. It is not as satisfactory as we would wish it to be, but unless a better one is presented, I would rather proceed in its execution than continue longer doing nothing. I would not excite vain hopes of our obtaining an amount even approaching to the sum of the claims. But some little we can do, and we shall earnestly endeavor to make that little as great as possible.

I will write you more fully about it another time. I give you my blessing and I ask your prayers.

Your faithful servant in Christ,

WILLIAM HENRY ELDER,  
*Archbishop of Cincinnati.*

CINCINNATI, October 10, 1886.

This explains everything in regard to the Purcell debt, and shows how the Archbishop's efforts to relieve the immediate suffering were partly hampered by the Assignee.

"The deplorable loss," as it is expressed in the letter, consisted of many thousands of dollars; and although this fell heavily upon the poor creditors and tore the heart of the Archbishop with grief and disappointment, not a word uncharitable escaped his lips, nor did he permit any one in his presence to assail the motives, or censure the acts of "the late Assignee."

In 1883 Bishop Elder succeeded the Venerable Archbishop Purcell in the See of Cincinnati. The conferring of the Pallium was made the occasion to

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

gather his six brothers around him. This meeting was planned by one of these brothers, Mr. Joseph Elder of Chicago, and was an unexpected and delightful surprise to the Archbishop. The papers of the day reported the six brothers as "all priests." They were, however, all married men, practical Catholics, and staunch Americans. The Archbishop was next to the youngest; and was then just sixty-four years old. The oldest member of the family was a Religious at Emmitsburg, Maryland. To her the Archbishop wrote a note, his brothers being with him at the time. Their kindly faces and warm fraternal affection were some compensation for the rude visages and harsh words which the poor distressed creditors had indulged in, when Archbishop Elder first came to Cincinnati. In three years, however, of patient toil and loving ministrations, the clamor had died down considerably, and peace began to spread its wings over the diocese.

A photograph of the Archbishop and his six stalwart brothers was taken on the occasion of his Jubilee, in 1883.

Three of the brothers stand on one side of the Archbishop's chair, and three on the other side; the Archbishop, of course, being the center of the group. The Archbishop was next to the youngest in age. Strange to say, death later did not disturb the symmetry of this band of brothers, but took one from the left of the central figure, then one from the right until all six had passed away, leaving the Archbishop alone! This photograph was copied in large and small sizes, and demands for it came from many quarters.

It was a beautiful exhibit of fraternal affection, so rare in our day. These men from all parts of the

## **Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder**

Union, called together by the bond of religion, were examples of pious parental training. It was the first meeting of all these brothers since they were children around their mother's knee, more than fifty years ago!

Archbishop Elder was always humble, he never became proudly conscious of his high title; his honors only seemed to make him more lowly in his courtesies, more gentle in his dignities.

He could be approached without ceremony by any one wishing to see him. His door was never locked, and a knock upon it always brought the prompt reply "Come in," spoken in a tone of cheerful welcome; and the visitor found himself greeted always with a gentle smile and a fatherly word. How many of my readers will bear witness to this!

A city official, connection of a distinguished Protestant divine, had occasion one summer to call on the Archbishop about a business matter.

His intercourse with the Catholic clergy was limited. He went to the Episcopal residence expecting to see much form and ceremony, and quite fearful of making some blunders that might result unfavorably for the matter he had on hand.

He was so impressed with this idea that when he met the Archbishop, he opened the conversation by explaining that not being a Catholic he did not know what form of ceremony was used in addressing a Bishop, but whatever it was, he desired to conform to it.

"Oh! as to that," replied the Archbishop in his kindly way, "don't bother about it at all. Just treat me as you would any other old gentleman." With

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

that introduction, everything was made easy, and the business was settled to their mutual satisfaction.

The subjoined article from the *Cincinnati Tribune* of March 9th, 1895, gives a charming glimpse into the private life of the great Archbishop. A non-Catholic journalist writes therein as follows, of a visit to His Grace:—

“Did you ever meet Archbishop William Henry Elder? He is a character worth knowing — one worth studying. A man with a wonderful history, with a charming personality, splendid record and enviable name.

“A *Tribune* man had the pleasure of a half hour’s chat with this distinguished prelate a few evenings ago. The conversation was informal. There was an absence of explanations as to what the newspaper man wished to talk about before he was admitted. The manner and method of seeing and obtaining an audience with the venerable Archbishop is more democratic than the ordinary person would expect. His time is more valuable and more sought after than any public office holder in the city of Cincinnati. Yet it is a fact that there is less red tape in gaining admission to shake the kind hand of the highest Church dignitary in the central part of the United States, than it is to gain for a moment the ear of the average public official.

“The reception room at the home of the Archbishop is furnished without attempt at ornamentation. The furniture is of the commonest kind. The visitor is seated in a chair covered with mohair. There are no velvety footstools. The carpet is thin and threadbare. The sofas are old and have seen service for a number of years. The walls are covered with paintings representing some of the saints. The picture of the lamented Archbishop Purcell looks down upon the visitor. There are crosses hanging from silken cords; representations of the crucifixion arranged in simple but conspicuous order all about the room. Upon the center table there is a small cross holding the bleeding body of Christ. It is of marble and is splendidly sculptured. Wherever the restless eye wanders, there is some suggestion of the Great Shepherd.

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

An air of sanctity and holiness pervades the entire room. You sit in meditative contemplation of your surroundings for but a moment.

"The Archbishop keeps his callers waiting but a little while. The door opens and one of the pleasantest faces imaginable enters. There is a smile of godliness around his lips. Two big gray eyes that mirror a gentle heart, look you squarely in the face. A hand as soft as velvet is extended and you voluntarily shake it as you would that of a friend. He gives it a genuine squeeze, holds it while he asks you your name, leads you to a chair, and before you know it you are seated and he is by your side. The visitors feel at home. There is not that cramped sensation experienced in visiting political dignitaries. His voice is so soft and kind, his manner so unrestrained, his welcome so genuine that you instantly say to yourself: 'Well, I am glad I came.'

"'Now, I would be perfectly willing to tell the *Tribune* something that would be interesting to its intelligent readers,' said he. 'But I know of nothing new either of a religious or secular nature of any interest whatever. The Catholic Church is attempting to save souls now just as it has always tried to do, and as a humble member of the Church I am contributing all I can toward assisting the erring to lead better lives. I have absolutely nothing to say concerning the world outside of religion and there is nothing in religion to be taught except the simple lesson of Christ and His love.'

"'What the *Tribune* would like to present to its readers,' said the reporter, 'is a short sketch of your every-day life. Nothing more than that. The world sees little of the members of the hierarchy. Your individual lives, to a majority of the public, are a mystery. They imagine that you live in a peculiar atmosphere; have likes and dislikes original to yourselves; eat differently, talk differently — exist in a manner opposite to that of the laity.'

"The Archbishop laughed heartily. He took the visitor by the hand again and led him to another room. It was his sleeping apartment. A common bedstead stood in the corner. The coverlet was of snowy whiteness and immaculate cleanliness. There were no silken draperies surrounding the sleeping place. The furniture was plain and the carpeting was of no

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

finer material than that to be seen in the boudoirs of any well-to-do merchant. The room was softly lighted, with just enough effect to show the magic blending of the canvas on the wall, portraits of the dead and living, that seemed to glow with life. In that room of ordinary size the Archbishop rests from his labors. No one disturbs him there. The only strict rule of the residence given to the very few servants is never to disturb the aged prelate in his resting hours.

"Adjoining his sleeping apartments is the library, which is one of the most valuable in the city. The long shelves are filled with the choicest of literature, embracing almost every subject. There are books in several languages, for the Archbishop is a linguist. The chairs in the library are more luxuriantly and elegantly upholstered than those of any other part of the residence. Here it is that the Archbishop lingers the longest. He loves his books, and his mind is never so tired but that it finds recreation among the choice classics of his library.

"He escorted the *Tribune* man through the other rooms, all arranged in simple and unpretentious order. 'I have no regular hours for work,' said he. 'I rise in the morning about 6 o'clock and say Mass at the Cathedral, after which I have my breakfast, which is composed chiefly of fruit and farinaceous food. In the forenoon I receive visitors as well as in the afternoon. I attempt to give an audience to all who have business with me. I have all classes of callers, some on business, others seeking spiritual advice, the sick at heart and the weary. They all find their way here, and I never refuse to see them if I can find time to do it.

"'A Bishop's position is an arduous one. I have a large correspondence which cannot be neglected. I must travel — go frequently at times when I do not feel in the humor for leaving my home. Still, I get so much consolation and gratification out of my duties that it is a pleasant life after all. God has been good to me in giving me health. I have no infirmities, I enjoy the songs of birds, the fragrance of flowers, the laughter of mankind as much now as when my blood was stronger and my limbs more supple.'"

Connected with his quiet way of entering his new diocese, unheralded, unannounced, is the incident of

## **Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder**

---

the furnishing of his room in the Archiepiscopal residence.

The clergy and a few friends selected a very handsome bedroom set. Marble top bureau and marble top toilet table, very naturally, were chosen; and the whole placed ready for use. But when Archbishop Elder saw the arrangements and learned what was the cost, he quietly, kindly, yet firmly insisted that every article should be sent back, and only the very cheapest pieces for a sleeping room be selected.

His exact words on the occasion have not been recorded, but he declared that it was not just to the suffering creditors that money should be expended uselessly, needlessly; and that he would not accept anything in the way of luxuries as long as the debt remained unpaid.

And never during his administration of the diocese did he permit any expenditure for himself beyond what was absolutely necessary. But he gave generously to the poor or the needy, and he studied the problem of paying the Purcell creditors, until its solution wrought out in love, and not by financial ability, brought peace to his people, and filled his own heart with gratitude to God.

His charity was so unobtrusive that only after his death did one learn from his faithful housekeeper how hard it was to keep the Archbishop in clothing, that frequently she would go to his wardrobe to take out a change of linen and find all had disappeared, he had given every thing away to some one in need.

Once a lady sent him some very expensive under-clothing for winter, and some for summer wear. He returned them with sincere thanks and appreciation of

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

her thoughtfulness, saying he was not accustomed to anything so elegant, and that he wore the same texture of clothing winter and summer because of the trouble to the housekeeper changing garments every season. He never kept more than two or three changes of clothing.

The following is an extract from *Souvenir Album Catholic Churches*, published 1896.

Fifty years ago, on March 29th, 1846, William Henry Elder was ordained a priest. The Golden Jubilee of that sacred event has attuned a chord of gladness this year in every Catholic heart, and particularly in Cincinnati, where the above name has for fifteen years been a household word in every devout and Christian family. Pæans of praise and benediction are resounding for Cincinnati's "Grand Old Man," and the festivities in honor of this golden priestly anniversary know no end. And the event well deserves to be celebrated. For the half century that William Henry Elder has spent in the holy ministry has been fruitful in the service of God and benefit to man. His life has been one long blessing to his neighbors, to whose interests it has been consecrated, and now full of years, crowned with honors, laden with good works, and followed by the benediction of the multitude who have profited by his labors, he begins to reap in advance some of the joy that is yet to be his in the presence of the abundant harvest of his career in the holy priesthood.

His life is a lesson and an inspiration, and he is justly admired by all, irrespective of creed or color, as a conscientious citizen and a noble churchman.

William Henry Elder was born in Baltimore, Maryland, March 22d, 1819, and is a son of Basil and Elizabeth Miles Elder. In his father's family there were ten children who reached majority, of whom he was the ninth. His father was born near Emmitsburg, Maryland, and removed to Baltimore in 1802, where he was a forwarding Commission Merchant. He died in 1869, being about ninety-six years old. Basil Elder's father, Thomas Elder, lived and died near Bardstown, Kentucky. William Elder,

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

who was the father of Thomas Elder, emigrated from England, and was one of the first settlers in Maryland.

So it is seen, the subject of this sketch is an American of Americans, whose forefathers fought for the religious freedom and progress of the colony, which laid the foundation of Catholicity in America.

In 1831 William Henry Elder entered Mount St. Mary's College, Emmitsburg, Maryland, then presided over by Reverend John B. Purcell, D.D., who was subsequently the second Bishop and first Archbishop of Cincinnati, and whose successor, in the latter dignity, the young student was destined to become.

After the regular classical course of six years he was graduated in June, 1837, and entered the Seminary for the fall term. In 1842 he left the "old mountain," the "nursery of Bishops," as it has been often called, for the famous Urban College in Rome. After four years of brilliant studies, he was ordained a priest by Mgr. Brunelli, on Passion Sunday, March 29th, 1846. Having won the degree of Doctor of Divinity, he returned home and became professor at Emmitsburg, his "Alma Mater."

Eleven years he spent at that seat of learning and school of piety, growing in grace and experience, practicing what he preached, and striving to be himself the model of virtues for the young Levites whom he had to train.

When the poor diocese of Natchez lost its Bishop through the death of Right Reverend J. O. Van de Velde, the Holy See, acting on the advice of the surviving Bishops of the province, judged that Father Elder was the man most fitted to bear the burden of administration there. The diocese comprised the whole state of Mississippi. It contained few Catholics. It was in need of priests, teachers, and institutions. It was not a salubrious place of residence for an inhabitant of the hill country of Maryland. But when Father Elder was informed that the Pope had called upon him to take charge of it, he did not hesitate in order to raise objections or to count the cost of the summons to his new field of duty. He was consecrated in the Cathedral of Baltimore, by Archbishop Kenrick, on May 3d, 1857. At once he proceeded to his diocese, and set to work to build up its waste places and supply its needs.

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

The young Bishop soon endeared himself to the people of Mississippi, regardless of race and creed. He was a true shepherd. He almost laid down his life for his sheep. Early and late he worked for his people. They were few, poor and scattered over a wide expanse. He made his pastoral visitations faithfully, and preached wherever he could get an audience. When the Civil War desolated the South, he kept from all entangling political alliances, as he had always done, in order that he might consecrate his entire energies to the work of the Master. The blue and the gray covered only souls for him, and officially he knew no difference between them because he concerned himself, as Bishop, only with the spiritual interests of the men in the two armies that came within his jurisdiction. They were to him all brethren of Jesus Christ. But in 1864 he was ordered to take sides officially and to subordinate his episcopal power to the military authority, then in control of the city. He was directed by the post commandant to use in his own Cathedral, and to instruct his priests to use, a form of prayer for the President of the United States.

Believing that this was a violation of religious liberty and a usurpation of his episcopal functions by a lay army officer, he respectfully declined to obey the command. He would pray for no one through compulsion, nor would he suffer any person, not his ecclesiastical superior, to dictate to him what to do or not to do in his capacity as Bishop. He was given his choice of doing as he had been unlawfully told by the commandant, or of going to prison!

"Then I'll go to prison!" was the quiet reply. Accordingly, to prison he was sent. He was arrested, summoned before the commandant and ordered to be taken to Vidalia, in Louisiana. But he did not stay there long. As soon as the facts in the case were submitted to the Federal authorities in Washington, an order for his immediate liberation was issued. This itself is proof that he was in the right, and that in vindicating his own authority in a matter of religion, he was upholding the separation of Church and State that is accepted as an American principle, as well as defending the right of all citizens to pray for whom they please, in the form they themselves prefer, without instruction from any civil or military official.

## **Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder**

---

But his crowning achievement in Natchez came during the yellow fever epidemic of 1878, when the population of the city was decimated, and the dying and dead lay in almost every home.

Forgetful of himself, with never a thought of flying from the plague-infested town to a place of safety, the Bishop went about day and night visiting the victims of the pest. He helped the needy, he comforted the sorrowful, he instructed the ignorant, he shrived the sinful, he anointed the stricken, he buried the dead. At last, weakened by his labors, and the strain to his nervous system, he broke down, and was himself attacked with the deadly fever. For a while his life hung in the balance. A report was even spread that he was dead. Multiplied prayers ascended to heaven for his recovery. The whole State of Mississippi, yes, the whole South, aye, the whole country, heard of his heroism, in staying at his post of duty, and watched with anxiety his struggle with death. At last a change for the better set in, and, as if by a miracle of God's mercy, he was saved.

As soon as he was restored to health he began a visitation of his diocese. He cheered the scattered congregations, he kept the light of faith aflame in many hearts, he made a large number of converts. But the day of separation was soon to come.

When the storm of trouble, that darkened the last years of Archbishop Purcell, broke over him and bore him down in sorrow to the grave, he needed a coadjutor to take the burden of care from him and to share the anxieties that pressed so heavily on his paternal heart. The place was no sinecure. It needed a man of prudence, of administrative ability, of tact, of knowledge, and of piety.

It was filled by the appointment of Bishop Elder, who became titular Bishop of Avara and coadjutor, with the right of succession, to the Most Reverend Archbishop of Cincinnati. This was in January, 1880. Three years later, in July, 1883, he succeeded to the See on the death of Archbishop Purcell. Few men would have cared to assume the enormous responsibilities that Bishop Elder was compelled to assume when he came to Cincinnati, but Bishop Elder was too brave to refuse the cross that was offered him.

The administration of diocesan matters devolved upon

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

Bishop Elder as soon as he came to this city. Archbishop Purcell, broken-hearted, retired to St. Martin's Convent, Brown County, leaving his auxiliary in full charge of all affairs, feeling confident that the latter's energy, zeal, probity, and diligence would eventually bring order out of chaos. And it was soon seen that the Holy See selected wisely in calling the heroic Bishop of Natchez to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, for a more disinterested, energetic, and saintly prelate America has never known.

The many noble deeds of Archbishop Elder will never be made fully manifest until that great day, when all secrets shall be revealed and God will render to every one according to his work.

When the year of his golden jubilee arrived, 1896, he would have wished the anniversary to be spent in silence and prayer, but he renounced his own inclinations in order to please his people. Cardinal Gibbons said: "If any one were to ask me, 'Why this ovation?' I would answer in the words of Our Lord: 'If we were silent the very stones would cry out against us and rebuke us.'"

The pomp and ceremony of that golden jubilee were only the fervent expression of his people's love. There was no need of fraternal affection (all his brothers had passed away) to cheer his heart on this occasion; demonstrations of reverence and esteem came from far and near. The overwhelming tide of grateful remembrances, from priests and people, from the hierarchy and the laity, must have extinguished all the fiery trials of the past, and borne his humble soul to the very footstool of his Lord and Master. The sermon preached upon the occasion in the Cincinnati Cathedral by Cardinal Gibbons is too beautiful to be omitted here.

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

"As Jesus went, they spread their garments in the way, and the whole multitude of His disciples began with joy to praise God with a loud voice, for the mighty works which they had seen, saying: Blessed be the King who cometh in the name of the Lord. And some of the Pharisees said to Him: Master, rebuke Thy disciples. And he said to them: I say to you that if they should be silent the stones will cry out.

"Jesus Christ, our Saviour, fled from honors during His mortal life, embracing the humiliations of the Cross. Nevertheless, on the occasion referred to in the text, He does not disdain to accept the homages that were bestowed on Him. As He approaches this city of Jerusalem, where He labored and laid down His life as the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, the people spread their garments on the way, and the multitude of His disciples praise Him with a loud voice, for the mighty works they had seen Him perform, and they exclaim 'Blessed is the King who cometh in the name of the Lord.' The Pharisees, who were always envious of our Saviour's glory, asked Him to rebuke His disciples and to stop the acclamations. But our Lord gives this answer: Let them alone. 'I say to you that if they should be silent, the stones will cry out.' He wished them to understand that in accepting their tributes of praise, He was receiving only what was due to Him, as their Lord and King.

"On this morning, a large number of the distinguished Prelates of the United States, the clergy of this diocese, and of other parts of the country, and this immense multitude of the laity, are assembled to congratulate your venerable Archbishop on this occasion of the Golden Jubilee of his priesthood.

"I am sure that if the decision had rested with the Archbishop himself, he would have preferred that the event had passed over in silence. But in honoring him to-day, we are not only gratifying the cherished wishes of our hearts, but we are complying with a sacred duty of religion and friendship. And if any one were to ask me: 'Why this ovation?' I would answer in the words of the Lord: 'If we were silent, the very stones of this Cathedral would cry out against us, and rebuke us.'

"St. Paul declares that 'the priests who have ruled well, are worthy of double honor, especially those who have labored in

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

word and doctrine!’ And the Scriptures say elsewhere that ‘he is worthy of honor whom the King hath a mind to honor.’ Observe how the King of Kings has honored His Apostles who were the first priests of the New Law. He honors them in the three most conspicuous ways that a master can glorify his servants, He cherishes them by His special friendship: ‘I will no longer,’ He says, ‘call you servants; for the servant knoweth not what his master doeth; but I have called you friends, for all things whatsoever I have heard of My Father, I have made known to you.’

“He associates them with Himself in the final judgment of men: ‘Yes ye shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel,’ and He makes them His co-heirs in His eternal Kingdom: ‘I go,’ He says, ‘to prepare a place for you, that where I am, ye also may be.’ Christ confers on His priests two prerogatives which transcend any earthly power. The priest is the Ambassador of Christ: ‘For Christ,’ says the Apostle, ‘we are ambassadors, God as it were exhorting you by us.’ If it is a great privilege for any citizen of the United States to represent his country in one of the Courts of Europe, how much greater is the prerogative of representing the Court of Heaven before the nations of the world! ‘Ye shall be witnesses unto Me in Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost bounds of the earth.’

“What an honor to be the herald of God’s laws among the nations of the earth! ‘How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of Him that bringeth glad tidings, and preacheth peace, that showeth forth good and preacheth salvation, and saith to Sion: Thy God shall reign.’ How cherished a favor to be the bearer of the olive-branch of peace to a world deluged by sin, and to proclaim that Gospel which gives glory to God, and peace to man, which converts the sinner, consoles the afflicted, and holds out to all the blessed promises of eternal life!

“‘No act that man can perform,’ says St. Thomas, ‘is greater than the consecration of the Body of Christ.’ And even Carlyle declares that no function in life is so sublime as that of a priest. He says: ‘Though you are the meanest in God’s hierarchy, is it not honor enough to spend, and to be spent for His sake?’

“The priest whom we honor to-day, ‘has spent, and been spent’ for the welfare of his fellow-beings. For fifty years he

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

has preached the Gospel, and has offered up with a clean heart the Immaculate Lamb upon the altar. And now Bishops and priests come to place with loving hands a wreath on his brow; and the faithful delight to lay garlands at his feet, as a tribute of their admiration and filial affection.

"The Elder family is an old and honored name in Maryland. They came from Lancashire, England, to Maryland, with the early followers of Lord Baltimore. The immediate ancestors of the Archbishop settled in Western Maryland, about the year 1730; and if the tradition is correct, the first Mass that was ever celebrated in Frederick County was said in the home of William Elder, the great-grandfather of the Archbishop. I had the privilege of meeting the Archbishop's father when he was approaching the patriarchal age of ninety years. He served in the war of 1812, and the sword which he wore is preserved as an heirloom in the family.

"If any man in the United States has the right to claim the privileges of an American citizen, both by ancestry and personal merit, that man is William Henry Elder. When Paul was threatened with being scourged for preaching the Gospel, he protested against the outrage, because he was a Roman citizen. Then the Roman officer said to him apologetically: 'I also am a Roman citizen, I bought the title with a great price.' 'And I,' replied Paul, 'am a citizen, not by purchase, but by birthright.'

"You will find in our day, some men crossing the Canadian line, or coming from Europe, who are scarcely naturalized when they manifest the animus of inflicting, if they could, civil and religious disabilities on men like the Archbishop, who are to the manor born, and whose fathers were citizens before them. But against all such aggressors we will protest, and say what Naboth said to the King of Syria: 'God forbid that I should surrender the heritage of my fathers.'

"Like many other Christian prelates, Archbishop Elder is, under God, indebted for his apostolic spirit to the piety and edifying life of his saintly mother. Father David, afterwards Bishop of Bardstown, was her spiritual director. After he moved to Kentucky, he continued to correspond with her, and the letters that passed between them reveal an elevation of Christian sentiment

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

which makes them worthy of being compared with the letters of St. Francis de Sales to St. Jane de Chantal.

"William Henry Elder was only eleven years old when he entered Mount St. Mary's College, Emmitsburg, which has been justly styled the fruitful nursery of Bishops. He there pursued his classical course, and afterwards studied philosophy and theology in the same institution. After receiving Deaconship, he proceeded to the famous College of the Propaganda in Rome, where he completed his divinity course, and was ordained priest in 1846. Returning to his native State, he became professor of Theology in his Alma Mater at Emmitsburg, and continued to fill that chair until he was consecrated Bishop of Natchez, in 1857, by Archbishop Kenrick of Baltimore.

"One of the first institutions that the Bishop visited after his consecration, was the college in which I was then pursuing my studies. Before imparting his benediction to us, he delivered us an earnest address, the substance of which I remember to this day, after a lapse of nearly forty years. His thrilling words were well calculated to fire our youthful hearts with a holy enthusiasm for the sublime vocation to which we aspired.

"In order to fully realize the difficulties which the Bishop had to encounter in his new See, we should take into consideration the extent of the diocese, the inconvenience of travel, the poverty of the missions, and the paucity of the Catholic population. The diocese of Natchez embraces the entire State of Mississippi, which is eight thousand square miles larger in extent than the State of Ohio with its three flourishing Sees.

"I venture to say that when the Bishop took possession of his diocese, there was scarcely a mile of railroad in the whole State. He had to travel by boat, or to journey through the interior of the State by public or private conveyances, or on foot.

"The physical labors of a Bishop are much alleviated when his relations are almost exclusively with a Catholic population, which knows and appreciates his sacred character. But his trials are aggravated, when he is daily brought face to face with a people, who, without any fault of theirs, have inherited religious prejudices from their ancestors. But the Bishop by his genial manners and Christian charity, soon dispelled these prejudices,

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

as the mist is dispelled by the sun. He was warmly received by Protestant and Catholic alike. The faithful welcomed him as a father; and those not of the household of the faith, received him as a man of God. They all felt that in entertaining him, they were made all the happier and richer by their hospitality. They felt that he had left a blessing on their homes, as our Saviour by His presence had blessed the house of Zacchæus, and Elias had blessed the house of the widow of Sarepta.

"His clergy regarded him more as an older brother than as their ecclesiastical superior. He was always ready to share their sacrifices.

"Many of us remember how some of the Southern States were periodically visited in former years, with the scourge of yellow fever. That state of things has happily passed away. I myself once accompanied eight young and healthy Sisters of Charity on a steamer from Baltimore to New Orleans. They were destined chiefly for the Crescent City and Vicksburg, and went to re-enforce the ranks of their companions, who had fallen at the post of duty. They left Baltimore unheralded by the press. They did not sound the trumpet before them. They rushed like the famous six hundred into the jaws of death, not bent like them on deeds of blood, but on deeds of mercy. They had no Tennyson to sound their praises; they sought not human applause. Their only ambition was — and oh! how lofty is that ambition — that their good deeds might be recorded in the Book of Life; and that they might be seen by Him who said, 'I was sick, and you visited Me.' Of these eight Sisters, six died during the following summer in New Orleans and Vicksburg, victims to the yellow fever.

"Like a true soldier of the Cross, the Bishop hastened to Vicksburg, where the fever raged. He was incessantly occupied in administering the Sacraments and words of consolation to the sick and dying, till he himself was stricken down by the fever, and for some days hung between life and death.

"During his illness, while I was attending the annual retreat with the Baltimore clergy, I received a message announcing the death of Bishop Elder. That night his demise was formally communicated to the community, and prayers were offered for

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

him and the next morning I said Mass for his soul in the presence of the clergy. During the morning, I remarked to a friend that called on me: 'This is sad news about Bishop Elder.' 'Yes, indeed,' he replied, 'the morning papers state that he is critically ill.' 'Critically ill?' I repeated, 'thank God for that.' It was the first time in my life that I thanked the Lord for the alarming illness of a friend. Because while there was life, there was hope.

"The next year the Bishop preached our retreat, and gave us ample evidence that his mental and physical powers were not impaired by the ordeal through which he had passed. During the retreat I received a letter from the lamented Bishop Gilmour, informing me that the Bishops of the Province of Cincinnati had unanimously recommended Bishop Elder as their first choice for Coadjutor to the Archbishop of Cincinnati, although he had been previously selected for San Francisco. I cheerfully complied with the request of Bishop Gilmour to urge the appointment at Rome.

"You may well conceive that this was a critical moment in the life of Bishop Elder. San Francisco was expecting him; Cincinnati was pleading for him, and Natchez, with outstretched arms, was striving to retain him. How did the Bishop act in this emergency? He acted as a self-sacrificing and obedient soldier of the Cross. He represented to the Holy See the lamentable condition of the Natchez diocese which had lost nearly one-fourth of its clergy by yellow fever, and which was still staggering under the heavy loss, and he asked permission to remain in his afflicted See. Rome, however, sent him to Cincinnati, and the loss of Natchez is your gain.

"It is not necessary or becoming in his presence to dwell on the Apostolic labors of your Archbishop since his advent to this See. Although on his arrival among you, he found before him a well-equipped diocese, thanks to the zeal of his predecessor and his colleagues in the ministry, nevertheless on comparing the Catholic Directory of 1880 with that of 1896, we are surprised to find the number of churches, schools, hospitals, and asylums that have been added to the list during his administration. For this success, the Archbishop under God, is indebted to your zealous co-operation. When the people, the clergy, and the

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

Bishop are united, they form a triple cord that cannot be broken. You have always rallied around your Archbishop; you have put your shoulders to the wheel; you have taken an active, a loyal, personal, vital interest in every measure he inaugurated in the cause of religion and humanity; and this is the secret of your spiritual progress.

"It is written of our Lord, that He went about doing good. He multiplied loaves in the desert; He gave sight to the blind, and hearing to the deaf, He cleansed the leper, and raised the dead to life. Your Archbishop lays no claim to such miracles as these. But is it not a miracle of grace that for fifty years he has led a life without reproach, and has preserved his priestly robes without stain? He has not multiplied loaves like our Saviour, but has he not multiplied institutions where the young and the old have been abundantly fed? He has not healed the sick, but has he not founded hospitals where every phase and variety of human suffering has found some remedy or alleviation? He has not raised the dead, but how many who had laid buried in the grave of sin, has he not raised to the life of grace? Oh! my brethren, never do we prove ourselves more worthy to be called the Ambassadors of Christ than when we cause the flowers of joy and consolation to bloom in hearts that were barren and desolate before. Your Archbishop has fulfilled in his life the definition of religion given by the Apostle: 'Religion pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit the widow and the orphan in their tribulations, and keep oneself unspotted from this world.'

"And now, most Reverend Father in Christ, permit me to congratulate you on this auspicious occasion; first, in the name of the assembled prelates who are eager to pay you honor, and to testify their affection for you as their older brother.

"I congratulate you in the name of the clergy of this diocese who revere you as their spiritual father, and who have entered with so much enthusiasm and unanimity into its celebration. I congratulate you in the name of the laity who are justly proud of you as their chief pastor. May I not also venture to congratulate you in the name of your fellow-citizens without distinction of race or religion? For they honor you as a citizen upholding

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

by your authority and example the civil laws and institutions of your country.

"And lastly, I congratulate you in my own name. There are many common ties that bind us together. We were both born in the same city of Baltimore, we were baptized within the limits of the same Cathedral parish; we were educated in the same old State of Maryland, the land of the sanctuary, and the cradle of civil and religious liberty; the same Pontiff that elevated Your Grace to the Episcopal dignity, imposed the hands of the priesthood on me; and we exercised the sacred ministry in the same diocese.

"May it be my privilege to walk in your footsteps, though at a distance, and to imitate your beautiful and bright example! May you live to celebrate the golden jubilee of your Episcopate, and when your course is run, may you receive the crown of justice from the Divine Shepherd of our souls!"

Archbishop Elder was deeply affected by this eulogy and his agitation was apparent to all in the Church. In a few trembling words he thanked all present for their prayers, and the Cardinal for his words of praise, but disclaimed the honor heaped upon him, and referred it all to the God in whose footsteps he had striven to follow.

The papers of the day spoke of the beautiful jubilee as a fit crowning of the Archbishop's long and honored career, and of the prayers of his people that they might long enjoy the blessings of his wise, benign, and gentle rule.

. . . . .

We permit ourselves to subjoin a number of letters which mirror better than any poor description of ours the beauty and grandeur of the Archbishop's character, and at the same time convey lessons that cannot be too frequently insisted and meditated upon.

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

### THE CROSS

In August 1880, when the Bishop had been only a little over three months in Cincinnati, he wrote a letter to one in trouble, which breathes such beautiful resignation that we feel it to be a transcript of his own feelings, then being lacerated by the distressing condition of affairs in connection with the Purcell failure. His own cross was pressing heavily upon him, but one can see upon Whom he leaned for aid and consolation; and yet what silence in regard to his painful position!

August, 1880.

*Dear —,* — A little word to you in your trial of bad health. I often think of you and remember you in my prayers and at Mass, that Our Lord may restore you the health which you would make such good use of. But this is the way with our crosses commonly; Our Lord chooses the one we think hardest to bear, and then He gives the grace to sanctify it a great deal more than we could another of our own choosing. Very often it is intended to discipline us in one particular virtue; that He wishes to have very bright in our souls. And if we put ourselves entirely into His hands, trying to be as perfect as we can in patience and resignation and loving confidence, He brings that virtue to the point He wishes and then takes off the Cross.

The cross Our Lord gives us, is not only better for us, but it is easier to bear than any other, because He suits His Graces to His own gifts: and it is a very sweetening satisfaction to know we are pleasing Him and that we can rely on His help. I want you to get right well if it is God's will.

They say one reason why Divine Charity is called a flame is because we can light our neighbor's candle without lessening our own.

"And then takes off the cross." This is truly what happened: the people slowly began to know their Bishop, to feel that he was doing all that man could

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

do, that he was living for them, not for his own ease or pleasure; and respect, veneration, and love sprang up in place of distrust, anger, and dislike.

His desire to pay the debt did not keep him from his spiritual work among his flock. He established the beautiful devotion of the Forty Hours, and the observance of the First Fridays. The paternal pride and fondness for his priests spurred them on to more earnest service in the cause of Christ; and his benignant smile and gentle courtesies brought old and young, rich and poor, the lofty and the lowly, around him — and thus was the *cross*, or at least the bitterness of it taken away.

In regard to reverence for the priests — the anointed of the Lord — the following letter gives advice to all Catholics.

I do certainly advise you to check as much as you can any disposition in those around to make criticisms on Priests and Church affairs. Of course it is always uncharitable to criticize our neighbors, unless there is sufficient good to authorize it. The fault is lesser or greater in proportion to the injury we do the person. But far beyond the wound to charity — in the case of criticizing Priests, — is the injury done to the parties themselves who practice it or listen to it. Such is the nature of our minds, that such criticism very seriously weakens in one's soul, the regard for sacred things generally, — the disposition to approach the Sacraments, — the spirit of prayer. It then weakens the faith, disposes the mind to entertain objection against the Church and Catholic truths. You often see this in practice.

Another letter in regard to criticism of the priest.

And now instead of worrying at the bad examples of some few unworthy priests, how joyfully we ought to entertain ourselves at the sight of the great army of faithful and hard-working priests, — who preserve in the world, as God's instruments, the

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

faith and piety of the thousands and millions of holy souls! I doubt whether the proportion of unfaithful priests is greater than it was among those whom Our Lord selected and trained; — hardly one in twelve! Certainly not one in twelve so openly and so absolutely treacherous, — so abandoned to all sense or pretense of duty.

Remember that we fix a very high standard for the Priesthood; — and some of the priests whom we grieve to see below the standard are still far above what we expect in others, — and certainly non-Catholics can not point to any body of men of equal numbers, who can compare with them in regularity and propriety of life, and particularly in the care of children and of the sick.

Their faults are seized upon, talked about, and exaggerated, while all the good they are doing is but little noticed.

Pray for all priests faithful and unfaithful, that the first may persevere in virtue, and the second find their way back to the path of righteousness, through the mercy and grace of God.

Letter of consolation to a widowed friend.

CINCINNATI, October 30.

Just look forward to when you will celebrate the centennial of your marriage — and all your crown of young stars. — With your Guardian Angels and your Patron Saints, and a whole host of your dearest friends, our Blessed Mother and her Divine Son presiding over your marriage feast. And think how you will look then upon all these crosses that are now so sharp and heavy — when you will see for each one its own reward. How will you talk then, about all the pains and fears you went through! You have heard soldiers talking over their dangers and hardships, and happy with their wives and children in their escapes and safe return. So try to anticipate the happy thoughts your crosses will bring to you in heaven. The medal is for T—. I have blessed and indulgenced, and I have touched it to my beads and medal which touched all the sacred objects I met in Rome and elsewhere, among them the Chair of Saint Peter, which is rarely exposed.

WILLIAM HENRY.

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

### Advice to those in authority.

You, of course, have a right to speak with authority but it must be exercised under responsibility and therefore cautiously and gently. Show yourself satisfied that N—— has done what she thought best for your happiness and hers.

### On sadness.

Sadness works its own way down into the heart without needing poetry to help it. Poetry is the expression of the beautiful and it is of the nature of the beautiful to make joyful. Whatever poetic beauty there is in sadness — is simply its power to purchase joy, when it is sanctified. All Christians' sorrows form a part of life's bright crown in heaven.

As "all things co-operate unto good for those" that are called to be Saints; and as you and all your family have been serving a long term in the way of the Cross, which is the school of Saints; so I hope C—— will have first a little rest to recuperate, and then find another place, better than the last.

The Archbishop preached very seldom to individuals on the subject of Holy Poverty, but he set an example of this virtue by every action of his daily life.

Who does not remember the old valise, the shabby overcoat, used and worn until it dawned upon him that he was giving pain, even doing an injustice to his generous clergy and people. Henceforth his garments were in keeping with his position, but without any adornments not deemed strictly necessary.

The following letter expresses with mingled earnestness and humor, his views upon this subject.

ASSUMPTION, 1880.

As for my notions of "Holy Poverty" they are pretty much the same that I expressed once to an old Protestant lady, when she said she liked the Catholic Church, all but the "Confession." I told her it was the same with me. And when she uttered her

## **Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder**

---

surprise that I should say so: I told her, Confession belonged to the same category as Medicine. It is not made to be liked; it is made to take without liking. And so it is with Holy Poverty, but like medicine and confession we will feel the benefit of it, when the pain is passed.

WILLIAM HENRY,  
*Bishop of Natchez.*

### **Advice to a Mother.**

CINCINNATI, March 14, 1881.

Perhaps after all it is better for C.— and it may be a relief to you, to have him settled in life with a good sensible Catholic wife. Of course you needed his help, and perhaps you needed not less the loving and grateful heart that would continue to give that help. But when we look into our own hearts, and observe our own want of generosity and gratitude toward that tender and most generous Heart of Our Lord, how little we do for Him, except with an eye to self — and how easily we excuse ourselves from giving Him the returns He pleads for, as if He were a suppliant, when we see all that in ourselves, we cannot be hard in our judgments of anyone else.

And then think of the temptations of a young man in this country, and think of his chances of getting a wife without faith or piety. All these things considered, you can take up your cross, indeed, as if it were no cross, but a blessing given to you by Our Lord. If you walk behind him in the way He leads, He will Himself carry the weight of the cross, and give you the credit and the reward.

To a lady grieving because she could not be near  
a Church.

CINCINNATI, July 31, 1881.

Where is more truly the home of the heart, than the house where the Sacred Heart dwells, where He is always ready to receive company and to give consolation and cheerfulness? So, I do not wonder that you all feel lonesome and disconsolate without Him. But over all that, rises a higher consolation and

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

encouragement. He is not like our earthly friends, who do not know the heart unless by its words and actions, and whose affections are apt to grow weak, when they are long and far away from us. He is always present and He sees our heart itself. And there are not many acts of our heart that are sweeter to Him, than our longing for His visible presence when we cannot have it. So all this loneliness and pain that you endure at not having the Blessed Sacrament and the Adorable Sacrifice continually, are so many acts of your love. And He sees every one of them — and treasures them up, and when you get to heaven, you will be amazed at the immense increase of your eternal glory, that you are gaining now every day. And these merits are all helping to hasten the time of His taking up a residence with you, through the residence of His Priest. The Angel told Daniel that the time for Our Lord's Incarnation was shortened because Daniel was a "Man of desires." And your "desires," shown by your prayers and labors will shorten the time for His coming to live in your Church.

And so for your other many inconveniences and causes of sadness; they are sacrifices to be borne for the love of Our Lord — and united with His sacrifice; and the bearing of them will merit for you to have them shortened, or perhaps compensated by other comforts and satisfactions that outweigh them. I wish you all a great deal of joy for the feast of the Assumption. It is an excellent work for you and L — to assemble the children for Catechism on Sundays. Add some singing and Mass Prayers and spiritual reading; you are planting deep and watering richly the seeds of faith. And offer some of your good works for me.

WILLIAM HENRY.

A touching episode relating to a severe fire which destroyed St. Xavier's Church.

Good Friday, April 27, 1882.

St. Xavier's blackened walls and charred timbers. Crowds of beholders, crowds of good people, that every Good Friday had made a pilgrimage to kiss the big crucifix laid on the floor of the Church. Now, — these same good people, gazing on

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

ruins, bewailing, crying — not figuratively, but literally. The big wooden cross, 16 feet long, from the top of the steeple, falling and lying on the sidewalk, muddy with the water of the engines. Spontaneously some good soul knelt and kissed the broken cross lying on the pavement. Others followed and almost all day they were kneeling on the curbstone, a dozen at a time, to kiss that cross; emblem of the ruin of their Church, and of the love of their Saviour.

Confidence in God in spite of many crosses.

BROWN COUNTY, May 26, 1882.

It seems as if I am passing you by just at this very time, when your cross is heavier perhaps than usual, with sickness in the family, and I fear, you not well yourself. So for the two or three postals that I owe you, I send this one closed letter: though it cannot be a great deal longer than a postal.

We are just in the days when the Apostles were waiting for the Holy Ghost. They knew not how long they should have to wait, — but they waited — and meanwhile they “persevered in prayer.” That time, it was only for ten days. But after that, they had to wait again and to suffer, for years and years (St. John, more than thirty years) before their crosses ended. (And St. John was the very type of innocence.) What wonder if we poor sinners with all our mean infidelities should have crosses, one piled on another for a life-time. And then to think that these very crosses are not so much our punishment as they are our riches; making us more and more like Our Lord and His Blessed Mother, and giving us new claims to share His glory in greater and greater abundance for all eternity. So let us try to be patient and cheerful. If we do not succeed entirely, the very trying will count largely to our credit and reward. Thank God He gives you the grace to try so effectually.

A letter of advice and cheer, and a little humor.

April 9, 1883.

I remember N——, now in Kentucky, was just dying away with chills and fever. Nothing would check them, and he was

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

wearing out. One morning he fell into the mill-race, which was frozen over, and went in over his head. Then he made his way back to the house, just to lie down and die. But he lay down, and went to sleep, and woke up without chills, and now he is a hearty man over sixty years of age! Well! Well! for body and mind, too, that will do you good. The toughest part of the wood is what grows under the pressing cold of winter. Now, maybe this is "old foggy" botany. But if it is not good botany, it is good "Mental philosophy" and good "Spiritual theology," too. Those experiences are precious for mind and soul. You may think them so precious you can hardly afford to buy many more of them!

Seriously, my child, I felt deeply interested and deeply gratified that you would endure that dismal night with so much fortitude; and most of all that you could write so bravely about it afterwards, and not bravely only, but graphically. I could just "know how it was myself." I felt as if "I had been there." And so, be equally brave in facing the inconveniences and trials of many kinds, that you must meet out there; and still more the privations of home and family and a thousand things that are no doubt haunting your memory and your imagination. All these endurances, patiently gone through, are forming character and vigor. And then, above all, each one by itself is a treasure for heaven, if only accepted and offered, in union with Our Lord.

A very happy Easter time to you! We can always make it happy, because we can always have Our Lord's Company to cheer us: and our Blessed Mother too. And if away from Mass and Sacraments, He has the more compassion for us, and the more tenderness. I give you my blessing,

WILLIAM HENRY.

To a writer.

CINCINNATI, Whit Sunday, 1884.

Yesterday I thought I would write to you, but the half hour at my disposal got broken, and I could not find another to put in its place, because it was Whitsunday eve; and the afternoon and a good part of the night were spent in helping to prepare souls for the Holy Ghost.

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

Now we have come from Pontifical Vespers, and I will take a little holiday with you. Only a little, because I must go across the river this evening to do some work of our saintly Bishop Toebe: who was called to heaven the very day you were writing to me, the First Friday of our Blessed Mother's Month. He had a most tender devotion to her. At his Consecration as Bishop, he added her name to his own, and he always signed himself Augustus Mary. One day while he was sick, and sometimes a little wandering in his mind, he asked the Sister Superior of the Hospital to get pen and paper to write for him. When she was seated and asked him what he wanted her to write, he said: "Oh you know what to write." She thought of the little ejaculation: "Most pure Heart of Mary, thou art my refuge," which she had learned in Latin. So she wrote "*Purissimum Cor Mariæ, tu es refugium meum.*" She showed it to him, and he said "Yes, that is right, give me the pen," and he signed it: "*Augustus Maria Toebe: Servus Sacratissimi Cordis Jesu.*" The Sacred Heart and the Blessed Virgin were his continual strength and comfort. So he died on the first Friday and in her month. He was a striking instance of power of the Holy Ghost to make His Apostles: "All things to all men." With all the energy and tenacity of his German blood, he had the warm heart of the Irish, and loved to talk with them for the simplicity of their faith. And they loved him dearly.

I was particularly charmed with that beautiful point in your article of deep silence at the Elevation. At Natchez we had a Protestant organist who appreciated the delicate beauties of the Church's ceremonials. When the bell rang just before the Elevation, he stopped short abruptly, and it was not only an effect to admire but even for those who did not notice it, unconsciously it increased their devotion and the solemnity of their impressions.

An extract from the article in regard to "silence" which pleased the Archbishop.

Why, oh, why is it that the choir (supposed to be made up of artistic and intelligent Christians,) why is it they will keep on vocalizing at the Consecration and the Elevation? Do they, or

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

do they not, believe, in the Real Presence? If they do not believe, yet they should respect the feelings of those who do.

But if they do, then why can they not still their voices during these few solemn moments when the hearts of the people are bowed in adoration before their hidden Lord?

Why can they not see the consistency of complete silence for that space. More devotional, more artistic than the exquisite music, would be a sudden hush of song and organ, followed by a deep, a reverential, an awe-struck silence. That sublime and eloquent silence, accented only by the altar-bell, is one of the distinguishing features of Catholic worship.

No earnest Protestant can help being impressed by it, when a great congregation bows low and not a sound is heard throughout the vast assembly.

The Protestant choir can imitate everything else. They can adapt very pleasantly to all the noblest compositions ever produced by Catholic masters for Catholic service, but they can not make use of that *sudden silence* which falls upon the adoring multitude bowing low before the Elevation of the Host.

Why therefore, O potent Choir, why rob us of that dear reverence which every Catholic heart feels towards the Blessed Sacrament? Why keep on with organ, chorus, or solo, when what we want is a little of that rare silence which is golden?

The following letter contains views that may startle some of its readers. The advice, however, emanated from a holy mind and deserves special attention. "In most marriages," says the Archbishop, "there is very great risk of their bringing more pain than pleasure."

CINCINNATI, December 22, 1886.

Yours of the 20th inst., is just now received. I am afraid I have treated you badly by my delay to answer your previous one. But it required time, and I really have been trying in vain to get it until now.

When two parties hold two different opinions, it is hard to answer very decidedly without first hearing from both. As far as I can judge from the statement of your view — I should

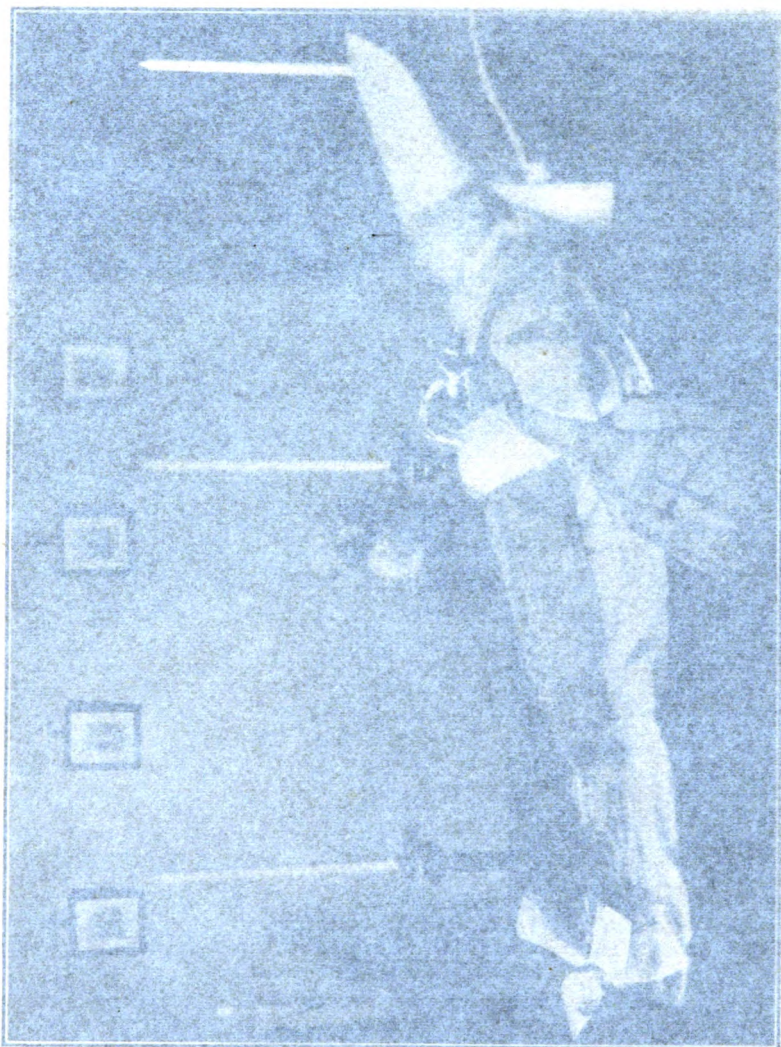
## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

answer thus: — If she still has a desire to marry the young man, I would not advise you to oppose it too persistently. You do well to be solicitous and to use influence against it, for the *probabilities* are that it will bring *great troubles*. But after all, the responsibility is her own, and she has a right to exercise it. It is natural and comes from God — that a young woman ordinarily looks forward to marriage as the complement of her life, and feels it a heavy cross to be compelled to single life. And after a disappointment — or two — it is an exceedingly great sacrifice for her to renounce another opportunity; and if she thinks your opposition unreasonably strong, it adds grievously to the cross to think that it is laid on her by her own Father.

There is always some risk, and in the most of marriages very great risk of their bringing more pain than pleasure. How much risk she may expose herself to rather than be condemned unwillingly to a single life — she is the one that has the right to judge. Again even the troubles of an injudicious marriage are in some respects easier to bear, than compulsory singleness. They are a part of the ordinary cross of life, and nature and grace are both prepared for them. But compulsory singleness is not ordinary, nor natural, and it is likely to produce a sourness of disposition that unfits for grace, and for prayer. If on the other hand, she has concluded not to marry him, if she has done this resolutely, because she is satisfied it is best, if she does it to please God, cheerfully relying on His Fatherly love for the future, — then it seems to me best, that she should see him as little as possible. An occasional sociable visit to the family, to let him feel that you are friendly, may do no harm. But frequent visits are likely to keep up the agitation, to expose her to fail in her resolution, or to keep her in a constant struggle against the growth of affection. This struggle itself must be an unhealthy strain and interfere seriously with her peace, — probably her health. The good that his visits may do to his soul, is uncertain and indirect; and not a sufficient reason for subjecting her to this disturbance. And God has other ways of aiding his soul; and it will serve him better to recommend him to God's own mercy to be shown in God's own way. A happy Christmas and New Year.

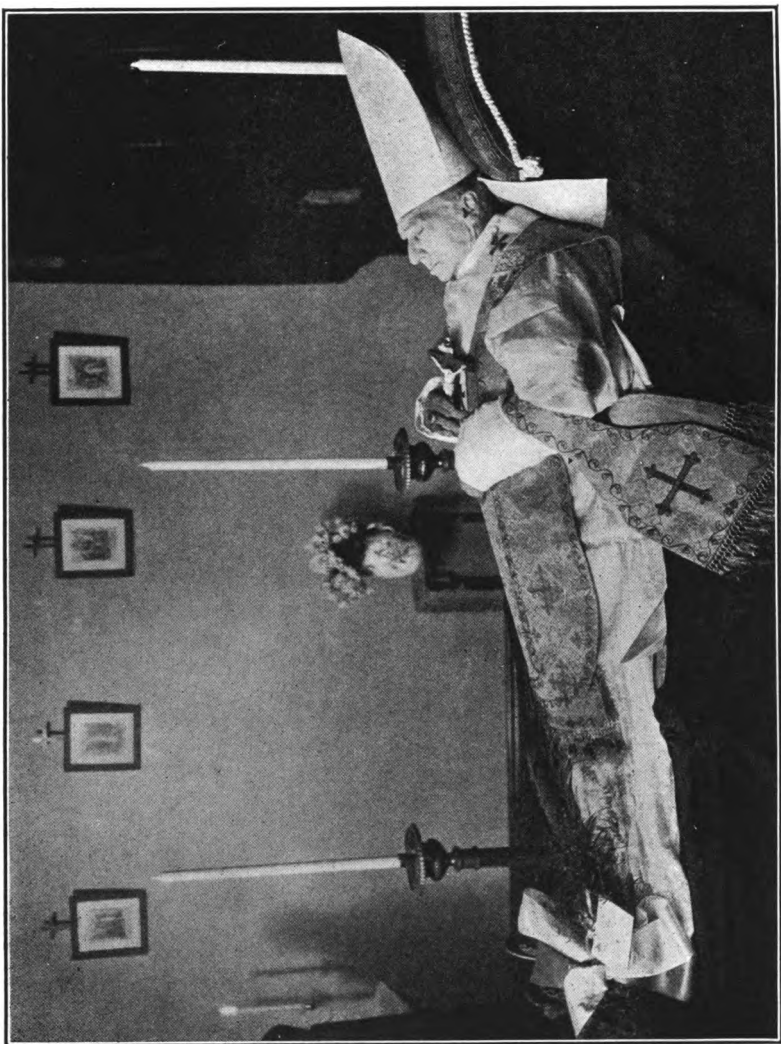
WILLIAM HENRY.



Digitized by Google

of her distresses — looked in the most of marriages  
for pleasure than pain more pain than pleasure. How  
often she said, "I would rather be unmarried than married,"  
and yet she was the one that has the right to say,  
"I am weary of my troubles of an infidelious marriage."  
It is no wonder that she should prefer compulsory singleness  
to compulsory wedlock, the cross of life, and nature and  
goodness are against her here. But compulsory singleness is  
not good either; and it is likely to produce a sourness  
of disposition, which unites to grief and for prayer. If on the  
other hand she has concluded not to marry him, if she has done  
that resolutely, because she is satisfied it is best, if she does it to  
please God, cheerfully relying on His Fatherly love for the future.  
— then it seems to me best, that she should see him as little as  
possible. An occasional sensible visit to the family, to let him  
feel that you are friendly, may do no harm. But frequent visits  
are likely to keep up the agitation, to expose her to fail in her  
resolution, to keep her in a constant struggle against the growth  
of affection. This struggle itself must be an unhealthy strain and  
interfere seriously with her peace, — probably her health. The  
greater his visits may do to his soul, is uncertain and indirect;  
but there is a sufficient reason for subjecting her to this disturbance.  
God has other ways of aiding his soul; and it will serve him  
better to recommend him to God's own mercy to be shown in  
his own way. A happy Christmas and New Year.

[ 112 ]



Archbishop William H. Elder, Lying in State



## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

The following letter proved prophetic, and "the genius for something" developed itself in due time, and wrought out from the timid school-boy a useful citizen, who "seeing clearly what he had to do," did it in the best manner possible.

Advice to a mother about a son.

SIDNEY, October 27, 1887.

Now for T——, I have not been directing him at all. I think I wrote you, that you and your husband are his proper guides, you know the circumstances and you have the grace. For his mental faculties I do not see that there is anything wrong. He had some little oddities when he first came, I did not see that he had any more, after he got well, probably not so many. And then I do not think they are signs of weakness, just the individuality of his thought and some twits of his wit and humor. Perhaps he may lose a little of it in his contact with so many boys at College. If you should have any way to facilitate his exercising his capacity for mechanical pursuits, I have a conjecture that, perhaps, they will be his most congenial and most successful occupations. He is so modest that he hardly thinks himself suited for anything; he must be encouraged. The fact is, I have a notion that he has a genius for something or other, if he can only strike the true vein. He has a peculiarly sweet character; and his little oddities even struck me as showing genius. I do not think that he will gain much by longer stay at school, unless he has a special desire to do so. The chief good that I expected was from exercise and air, and from contact with a number and variety of companions, and probably these two months have been sufficient for those purposes.

Do not be concerned about the promise T—— tells you that he made. I do not remember his telling me, but he may have done so, without my attaching importance enough to fix it in my memory. I do not believe he was sufficiently master of himself to make a binding vow, and even if it were binding every Bishop and almost every Confessor has power to dispense or commute. From all that you say I suppose it will be best, after

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

a few weeks at the mountain, to make his way home. And you need not be uneasy about that promise weighing on his mind. I do not believe he frets. He feels sometimes at a loss because he does not see clearly what to do, but I think he waits quietly for circumstances to develop. It would be well if you study whether he will be benefited by a month or more at the manual training school to try his taste.

### Advice about vocation.

CINCINNATI, November 4, 1887.

Your mother writes me that you think you must carry out your promise to prepare for being a Priest: and that therefore you ought to remain at College and begin to study Latin. She asks me to write you what I think of that.

Now, if your reason for becoming a Priest, is only because you promised it, that reason of itself, is not sufficient. Even if you made a vow, yet if God does not wish you to be a Priest, you must not put yourself into that holy and difficult state against His Will. Your Confessor has power from the Church, to release you from the vow, and prescribe you some prayers or other good works in place of it.

If, besides your promise, you think you have a vocation, then you ought to consult your Confessor, and you should also ask the opinion of Reverend Fr. A. — You said you had not felt much disposition for studying, and I think you said you found it hard to learn. You should look forward to twelve years of close study. Perhaps it may be reduced one or two years; but probably not; — i.e. — six years for Latin, two for Philosophy, and four for Theology. Even if it were only eight or nine years, it is a long time. Not too long if God really calls you, but if it is too long to bear, it will be a sign He does not call you.

You understand then, that your Mother does not wish you to come home now, if, from the advice you get, you believe you ought to begin to study for the priesthood.

WILLIAM HENRY.

The following shows the distinction between adoration and reverence, and explains the meaning of the word worship. A gentle admonition is given with

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

such kindness that the recipient is taught a lesson without any sting connected with it. "Take care to mingle much charity."

CINCINNATI, February 10, 1889.

You certainly have a ready pen, and you wield it vigorously and to good purpose. I see you have a decided inclination to irony, and it is a very serviceable weapon. I recommend that when you have the opportunity, from the nature of the subject, you follow it up, by clear statement of the truth, then it will serve a double purpose to discomfort your opponent, and also to enlighten him, if he wishes to be enlightened. And still better, it will enlighten others, even if not himself. You must understand, as the Irish boy said in "The Poor Scholar;" that "the ignorance of the world is wonderful improvin', Glory be to God!" Our poor non-Catholic neighbors have truly a wonderful fund of ignorance. Even the well read and well improved on other matters, seem to hug their ignorance about the Church, its doctrines and practices. And one of your highly readable articles disposes a person to receive with favor a serious word from you, which may be the seed of most wholesome thought. So, try always to put in some solid information. If only one soul notices it, it will bring you a great reward, and while you continue to use your skill in irony, yet watch over it and prune any tendency to exuberance. Your *article* would have been improved if you had drawn the distinction between "Adoration" and reverence, — even "worship." For worship is in itself simply an acknowledgment of "worth," whether in high or low degree. As in England a magistrate is called "His worship," and in the marriage ceremony these words are said: — "With this ring I thee wed; with my body I thee worship."

Go on, you are doing good service. Take care to mingle much charity. If you think of something sharp that is liable to leave a *sting*, rather make a sacrifice and leave it out; or give it such a turn as will show good humor and hinder the sting. Your object must be, not only to demolish error, but to show truth and make truth agreeable.

WILLIAM HENRY.

## **Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder**

---

This letter discriminates most clearly between modesty of character and timidity. The Archbishop never failed to speak the helping word in season.

To a writer.

September 5, 1888.

And so you are known and recognized as a representative in the scientific world — and away so far from home. Now shake off your timidity and let those who are near to you have a chance to see how much is in you. Modesty is based on a low estimate of our own worth, but timidity arises in great part from a fear that our neighbors will find out our lowness, or perhaps a fear of finding out ourselves that we are not as great as we want to be thought. Now you have not much of that kind of timidity, but what little you have you ought to throw off, and then your modesty will clothe itself with courage. Modesty should be allied with bravery. I have but little talent; that little is not of my own right, but a gift or rather a trust, to be used for the purposes of the Giver. Then I'll use it bravely, and not worry beforehand about the result.

I cordially unite in congratulations, and in exhortations to go on and do more service.

WILLIAM HENRY ELDER.

Advice to a writer and one in sorrow.

CINCINNATI, OHIO, April 2, 1889.

Many thanks for your birthday greeting which reached me exactly on the 22d. Seventy years! A long account and I cannot have a great deal longer to prepare for rendering it. Let us grow more earnest in helping each other with our prayers.

I was not sorry to learn that the title to T——'s article on preaching was not her own. Her simpler one appears to me preferable. The article itself was well written: but I prefer lighter subjects. Preaching is the delivery of the Word of God. What topics to choose and how to treat them are very grave matters, and subjects of study.

And now, for your own birthday all good wishes and prayers.

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

Make S—— read something bright about heaven, "Easter in Heaven," for example — Just before His Passion Our Lord lifted up and cheered His Apostles with the Transfiguration.

A very pleasing book, is "The Spirit of St. Francis of Sales," containing traits of his character, sayings and anecdotes.

### Advice to a sick person.

CINCINNATI, July 14, 1888.

You want change of place and objects and persons. Look at it with dry reason. You speak of having duties, and that with all your good will, you cannot divest yourself of ideas and feelings that interfere with them. God offers you the means to divest yourself. First prayer and Sacraments — supernatural helps. But the natural helps also, are God's creatures, and He has given them the power to help us and He expects you to use them. These natural means are the changes I have just mentioned.

Silent charity to a young woman whose father was ill.

May 25, 1900.

I feel very much concerned at the change in your father's condition. I offered Mass for him this morning. I fear this change indicates his approaching end. I feel very much for you too, dear child, to have so much extra work laid on you. You said in one of your previous letters that you had some young woman to help you. I trust that she is still with you. When I go home tomorrow, I will send you something that will enable you to get more help in your work and any little comforts you may need for your father.

### To an invalid.

CINCINNATI, 1889.

You must not measure the usefulness of your life by the amount of active service you may have done in the world around you. As St. Paul says, a man may give all his goods to the poor, and yet spend a useless life, "it profiteth me nothing." The one thing that makes life useful is the serving of God, and that consists in doing His Will with a willing heart.

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

Only three years of Our Lord's life were spent in actual service of men. The hermits in the desert and the Carmelites in their cloister — if they are faithful to prayer, are serving God and their neighbor too. So, as long as God is served by prayer and patience, the life is filled with usefulness. And if you are not patient as you think you ought to be, the very effort to be more patient and the acts of sorrow for not being patient — all these are useful to your soul — and serviceable to the Glory of God. And by virtue of the Communion of Saints, every act of virtue in one person brings God's favor on his neighbors. See how you served God by your unpretending intercourse with N——. See all the good he afterwards accomplished as Priest and Bishop. God has let you learn this for your encouragement. When you get to heaven you will learn of many others whose sanctification has been directly or indirectly aided by your example when you least thought of it, — by your words — and by the graces obtained through your patience.

What admirable advice is given in the following letter, and what a Christian view of marriage is here unfolded. It was written to a lady who objected to her son-in-law contracting a second marriage shortly after the death of his first wife, her daughter.

The words of the saintly prelate prevailed over human sentiment; and very soon the bereaved mother opened her heart and her arms to her son-in-law and his new bride. And in return, she was devotedly loved and cared for by them. An unusual fact in the history of mothers-in-law!

CINCINNATI, Purification, 1889.

*My dear ——*, — I have been devising a long letter to you, and arranging in my mind the points of persuasion. But I find I could not write that for some days to come; so I just throw out my thoughts as they come.

You must not expect Mr. X—— to pass all his life in celibacy. There is no reason requiring him to do so. It is God's

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

design that persons in the world, unless in exceptional cases — should live in the married state. To attempt the contrary, is often to expose one's self to great dangers, both in faith and morals. Those dangers are increased for a young convert, — with all Protestant relation, and not even a fixed home — being with all sorts of people! For my part, I do not doubt that your dear J—— is praying now that he may have the happiness of getting a good Catholic, pious, and sensible wife, and if she were capable of feeling grief — she would be deeply grieved to see any event that should frustrate his opportunity of doing so, and thus expose him to the danger of getting a non-Catholic wife, or a Catholic even, without instruction and piety.

If you can do anything to please J—— now, anything to offer to Our Lord in her behalf, it will be by entering heart and soul into her desire to see him made safe in life by a good Catholic wife.

You say how all the C—— family welcomed D——, who had first been married to your beloved and saintly sister who had passed away. We know that D—— had need of a wife, not only for his children, but even more for himself. Your family drew closer to her than his did — all her life she was more sociable with them than her own. She was the main hope of saving his soul.

And see how F.'s children have clung to M., and what a blessing she is to him and to them. Then for J——'s sake put your heart and soul into the good work of seeing N. blessed with a good, pious Catholic wife; make her feel that your soul is in it. A long letter after all. God bless you all.

WILLIAM HENRY.

Contemplate our Blessed Mother on this day of her heroic offering of her Divine Infant for love of us: giving Him up to be "A Man of Sorrows," and to the ignominy of the Cross. She will make your offering sweet to you.

The following letter condemns and explains extravagance:

CINCINNATI, July 20, 1889.

I cannot say, extravagance — never helps the poor. It often does help some individuals or even some localities. Even

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

a big fire helps the poor laborers who get work in repairing it. But extravagance is a wasteful way of helping some. It does not add to the wealth nor prosperity of the whole people, it only transfers a portion of the wealth to the more needy, while more is wasted than is transferred. Of course there is room for difference as to what is extravagance. Ordinary comforts for one person would be extravagance for another. I think Empress E—— did harm by giving an example of wastefulness, and leading many to spend more than they could afford; or sums, which they would have applied to more useful purposes.

Encouragement to live and work for God's Glory  
and our own merit.

CINCINNATI, August 25, 1899.

Why should you be amazed at Our Lord's weeping over Lazarus? Though the expression in Latin is rather, "groaning."

But our affections are given by God as part of our likeness to Him; and St. Paul, speaking of the "reprobate sense," to which the Romans had been delivered in punishment for their turning away from God, mentions as one of the manifestations of this reprobate sense, "without affection." When we feel affection for anyone, — any separation is more or less painful, even for a short time; and though relieved by hearing from him or of him, still more painful, when for an indefinite time, — and when there is no sensible communication. We are so much creatures of sense — that we cannot be satisfied in this life with communications that are purely spiritual — I know something of the weakness of our poor nature. And yet I keep always hoping that with God's grace, you may not only have strength to bear the load that bends you, but the better strength to recover your elasticity and infuse vigor into all around you. "Why should any Christian want to live?" Because it is only in living that he can add to the glory of God and to his own rewards in heaven. Some holy writers have speculated to this effect; That if such a thing were possible, the blessed in heaven, now that they see what heaven is and how much God deserves our service, would be willing to come back and labor and sorrow on earth

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

till the day of judgment, for the purpose of adding to the Glory they would afterwards give to God by their merits acquired on earth.

WILLIAM HENRY ELDER.

Advice to an aggressive Catholic writer whose "faith in the faith" was so vivid that she longed to see every Catholic, whether priest or layman, living up to the best and holiest of its requirements.

October 13, 1900.

Do not be unhappy at what I wrote you. I recognize that you are doing much good in many things — and that you are very sincerely desiring to do good in all things.

My admonition was not an authoritative order, it was only a fatherly (or uncle-ly) advice. We are not bound to follow advice. We ought to give it whatever weight we think it is entitled to, and then draw our own conclusions on our own responsibility. I therefore only counsel you to be circumspect, to consider conscientiously not only the effect you desire to produce, but what effects your words will practically produce on the minds of those who will read them; considering the various classes, — good Catholics and indifferent Catholics and non-Catholics, the friendly and the hostile; likewise the laity, the Clergy and the Religious.

My own rule is, to not publish anything without first reading it to at least one other person, and giving to his comments the consideration that they seem to merit. And very often I find that my words make an impression differing from what I intended to make.

God bless you, my child, work on for God, but use the means God gives you to learn so to work as to truly advance His glory.

Grieving over the death of his priests.

Easter Night, April 7, 1890.

Late and tired, and preparing to go to the country to-morrow for the funeral of one of our most esteemed priests.

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

A telegram from Hot Springs, to-day, reports another equally esteemed, probably dying there. Rather doleful for Easter! But after all what does Easter tell us? But to look beyond death, and "Rejoice always, for the Lord is nigh." The pains pass, the joys never end.

These letters show the kind interest which he felt in human joys and sorrows and also the deep sense of a Bishop's responsibility to his spiritual children.

His affection for those of his own flesh and blood, given by God, as he expressed it in the preceding letter, "as a part of our likeness to Him," never interfered with his love for his priests and his flock, — and "home" to him was the place of duty always.

Never during his long episcopacy, nearly fifty years, did he give to his relatives one moment of that time which justly belonged to his priestly duties, and which he had consecrated to the service of God.

He loved, he venerated his clergy, and although he never resented anything said or done against himself, he was quick in defending them from animadversions or blame. To speak slightly of a priest hurt him deeply; and made one feel that the "anointed of the Lord" was to him, and should be to every one, too high, too sacred, for even the touch of a caustic word.

Upheld in such esteem by his saintly soul, small wonder it was that his clergy rarely failed to reach the height their sublime vocation required of them.

Expression of satisfaction at some one advancing in conformity to God's Holy Will.

CINCINNATI, December 2, 1890.

Yours of Thanksgiving Day reached me yesterday. Thank God for the spirit He gives you of holy submission; and I hope

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

Christian cheerfulness. It is a great happiness to know that every effort we make to conform ourselves to His Holy Will brings new graces and is laid up in His Book of Life for its own particular reward. I hope T—— is entering into the same spirit. And it will be very pleasing to Our Lord if she applies herself again, as far as health will allow, to using the abilities He has given her for writing. When He takes one help from us, He knows how to supply it by other means if only we exert ourselves. And it will be good for herself that she continue. Her father's prayers can help her as well as his words and his writings. The memories of the past must not hinder us from the duties of the present, but rather stimulate.

The faith expressed in this letter should awaken the same feeling in those who read, while its earnest exhortations must spur one on in the path marked out for gaining heaven.

CINCINNATI, January 16, 1891.

Your New Year's letter was duly received and your announcement of E's—— death has awakened my recollections of her that give a picture of a lifetime in all its courses. The lively, romantic, poetic girl just out of school, the wife, mother, widow:— her second marriage with all its vicissitudes,— the grandmother, the old woman drawn up with asthma. If when she was a girl she could have had a picture of the rest of her life put before her, how impossible, how absurd it would have appeared. And so it was with innumerable generations before ours, and so it will be with many of the young girls and boys of to-day:— and on, till the end of generations. A passing world for each one: nothing lasting but eternity: nothing good, nothing true but heaven.

Oh, how thankful we ought to be for our Holy Faith that tells of heaven, and lights our way there. How humble and repentant for all the graces we have let pass unused. How elevated and joyful that the same Faith tells us of God's mercy and how to obtain it. How contented and cheerful with whatever He gives us pleasant or unpleasant, because all of it — joys

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

and sorrows, are means to multiply our merits and our rewards. How watchful to use them all, and each one as it comes: — so as to atone for the past and purchase more joy in the future. How zealous to obtain for others by good example and prayers — these favors which have been given to us, so unworthy!

The saintly advice given in the last letter suggests some reminiscences of his own childhood.

Conversing one day with an old friend on the early days of his youth, he said: “I do not remember ever giving pain or offense to my mother, or being the occasion of sorrow to her.”

What a sublime lesson to the youth of our day! Filial devotion, alas, seems to be dying out, with many of the other old-fashioned virtues.

A few months before the death of Archbishop Elder, he was asked what advice he could give to the young people of the present time. The answer ought to be written in letters of gold and worn over the heart of every American child. *Reverence your Fathers, and try to make your Mothers happy.* Ah, fathers of family, behold your duty laid before you, — viz.: to be worthy of your children’s reverence!

And how heart touching is that word to the young, try to make your mothers happy. How many children give a thought to the trying to make mothers happy?

The Archbishop’s mother, the saintly Mrs. Basil Elder, always gave this advice to her married children: — “Raise your little ones in the fear of the Lord, and teach them to be humble and obedient.”

Look into homes to-day. Do we find such virtues inculcated in all Catholic families? Pride and disobedience are too generally the attributes of the adolescents of this age.

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

It is said that Mrs. Elder prayed that no one of her ten children should ever become rich. She recognized the hindrances great wealth would interpose to the realization of that simple Christ-like spirit with which she desired them to meet the obligations of life. Her prayer was answered, and not one of her boys ever became wealthy; but, without exception, they grew to noble manhood.

A letter full of light and cheer.

CINCINNATI, April 25, 1891.

I am very much grieved to know of the increase of your infirmities. But they belong to this life and to our age. I feel the approach of them also. God has been wonderfully good to you, and you have been especially blessed in your children; not one of them to make you feel uneasy. And you must not relapse now, into your old frettings about doing nothing in your life. We do not know what are our merits and demerits. God keeps the account. It is well for us to humble ourselves at the sight of His daily and hourly streams of graces during all our life; and of the few straggling efforts that we have made and the weakness and selfishness that was in them. Very often those that appear good to ourselves and others have a hidden worm that makes them of little worth or none at all. So none of us can know how we stand in the Book of Judgment. But to acknowledge our emptiness and to see clearly and be humbled at it, this is itself a great favor from God. And we must use this painful sense of our sins and negligences and emptiness — not to fret ourselves and grow despondent; but on the contrary to draw us nearer to our Lord who wishes to supply all these things out of His sufferings and merits, — if only we ask Him, and put our confidence in Him. Indeed as Father Faber says “the sight of our sins should lead us on to great joy” that we have a Lord who is so patient and so forgiving; and this again should increase our sorrow for having offended one so generous and so tender towards us. This is one of the applications made of Jacob’s dream of the Ladder with Angels ascending and descending.

## **Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder**

Ascending with the confession of our sinfulness and helplessness, and descending with God's pardon and strengthening graces.

The Archbishop was always ready to indulge in harmless humor. A near relative who had gone from a Southern town to visit him in Cincinnati, when the difficulties of his new Episcopate were pressing heavily upon him, wrote back on her return that she feared his heavy cross would break his generous heart and playfully complained that he had turned away from her departing railroad train without giving a last look.

His lightsome answer here given was to conceal the real anxieties of his mind, so his relatives would not be uneasy on his account.

Don't be afraid of the broken heart. A man with so little poetry that instead of "the last look" he shows only "the back of his overcoat" hasn't much heart to break, or at least it is not of "the breaking kind."

To his sister, after a long silence and his finger still sore.

"All Hallows, 1891."

Sister dear,  
The cause is clear,  
Finger sore;  
Threatening more,  
Line won't drop,  
Pen must stop.  
More to tell  
When the finger's well.  
Ouch!

I don't know whether to call it "second childhood," but I have to hold my pen now, pretty much as I wanted to hold it when I first began to write.

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

To a widowed friend who was invited to a "golden wedding" banquet.

November 12, 1891.

I am sorry I cannot be with you for the celebration. No, you are not out of place in such a gathering. Joys and sorrows temper each other in this life. We are all getting to the end; and our rejoicings are elevated and sanctified by the two-fold remembrance that all joys of this life are of brief duration, and that both joys and sorrows here are instruments for gaining endless joys hereafter if we use them right. So try to enter into the rejoicings as little glimpses of the greater ones to come.

These few lines show the true apostolic spirit which made God's work the very key-note of his life and labors.

December 9, 1892.

I suppose you hardly had any serious expectations of my spending Christmas with you. I never intended that. It is one of the days when only necessity can justify a Bishop's absence from home.

### Advice to a young Father and Mother.

CINCINNATI, September 12, 1902.

There seems to be an active growth in our Catholic men's societies; growth both in numbers and in their interest for religion — approaching the Sacraments, etc.

Tell E—— and N—— to make a close study of how to train that boy. A strong will is a valuable element in a man's character, if rightly trained. They will do well to consult some experienced Pastor, and others of experience. I may say in a general way, first necessity is, *not to lose temper themselves*, not slap, nor scold, nor threaten. Be firm, use punishment enough to enforce obedience; but give it calmly, not in anger, but in love; not so much a punishment for the past, but as a means for *improvement*. And enforce obedience *steadily*, not by impulse,

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

at intervals; but every time that there is disobedience, even if it costs inconvenience.

Do not give unnecessary commands. Leave him freedom as much as possible. Praise him whenever you can. Make him feel free and happy when he is doing anything not wrong.

God bless you all!

WILLIAM HENRY.

The date here is indistinct but seems to be May 3d, 1903.

MISS EMILY G. CALLAGHAN,

*My good friend,* — Let me thank you heartily for your gift of the Memoirs and writings of Very Reverend James Callaghan, D.D.

My acquaintance with your very Reverend Brother was not of long duration, but it made a very pleasant and durable impression. It was begun as I have already told you by an act of kindness to me, which involved considerable sacrifice of his own comfort; giving me his own room, and contenting himself in a garret room. And then his continued devotion to the Venerable Archbishop Purcell, his filial reverence and his almost womanly tenderness with him, manifested depths of character which command my admiration and my gratitude. For every act of kindness to the Archbishop I felt as done to me.

This volume being only just received, I have read only a little of it, but this little gives me assurance of much pleasure and profit in its further perusal. With all esteem and good wishes,

Your servant in Christ,

WILLIAM HENRY ELDER.

*Archbishop, Cincinnati.*

We here give two letters written about a year before the Archbishop's death, and in which the writing shows feebleness of hand, but no diminution of kindly interest and earnest encouragement in matters social or religious.

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

September 14, 1903.

*Reverend Dear Father,* — It comes as an inspiration from our Immaculate Mother on this Feast of the exaltation of the Cross, day that commemorates her sorrows over the sins of men, and her power over her Divine Son's mercy, that you make proposal to extend the work of Catholic Total Abstinence into our Academies for young ladies.

Who suffers more from the evils of intemperance than innocent women; and who have more influence for good over young men, future husbands, and fathers than Catholic young women? Most heartily I recommend this work to those who are forming our Catholic women.

I give my affectionate blessing to them and to the precious souls under their care. I will remember them and you constantly in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. I ask your prayers.

Your servant in Christ,

W. H. ELDER,  
Archbishop, Cincinnati.

To a lady in grief.

CINCINNATI, November 11, 1894.

We are living in a "valley of tears" — but Our Blessed Mother keeps her "Eyes of Mercy" fixed upon us. She is all the time our Advocate, and she is looking forward with us to the end of our exile when she hopes to show us the Blessed Fruit of her Womb, Jesus; if only we will be faithful and patient. And then — forever and forever — how we will thank her and her Divine Son for all the trials and sorrows that have purchased for us such an exceeding weight of glory.

Our Lord seems to suggest to your mind and heart all the comforting thoughts, by which He not only lightens our burthens, but even gives sweetness to our yoke; His own burthen and His yoke — He is pleased to call them. And He makes them His own and offers them to His Eternal Father as His own price to purchase for us the larger share of His Own Glory. It is hard for us to realize this here; we must simply accept it by faith, "in an obscure manner," and wait till we "see God face to face;" and then we shall see the infinite love of all the crosses that He has laid on us.

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

A letter full of paternal affection.

CINCINNATI, December 13, 1894.

This is the anniversary of my subdeaconship 1840 — and my Pallium 1883. Eleven years ago we were an unbroken chain of seven brothers with the golden link, Sister Helena: divided in space, but still united to make the Octave. Well, a few years more may God's mercy unite us again, with all the other links, and all the new successive links to be a crown for our dear Father and Mother forever.

A letter of advice to a person whose Pastor did not always give edification. It is particularly instructive at the present time, when criticism is rampant everywhere.

CINCINNATI, May 10, 1895.

Your last letter did indeed bring sad and happy memories. Birth day and Wedding day! and the events and persons that they recall! Sad and happy like all this life: to look through all these clouds and hope for the happiness that shall have no sadness; when the memory of sadness shall be itself a joy in the sight of its infinite and eternal reward and the possession of God; the Author of all joys forever. How we ought to thank God and humble ourselves at that finding that He has given us this precious faith in spite of our meannesses and our ingratitude. When we see such men as you describe, still subject to such littleness — letting themselves be fooled by such empty frothings and vulgar falsehoods of the A.P.A. Our disappointments and struggles and anxieties are indeed hard to bear; but what if God had given us all the ease and enjoyments of life and not given us our Holy Faith; and the examples and merits of Our Suffering Lord, to support us and to sweeten our trials?

And now instead of worrying at the bad examples of some few unworthy priests, how joyfully we ought to entertain ourselves at the sight of the grand army of faithful and hard working Priests — who preserve in the world, as God's instruments — the faith and piety of the thousands and millions of holy souls. I doubt whether the proportion of unfaithful priests is greater

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

than it was among those whom Our Lord Himself selected and trained; — hardly one in twelve. Certainly not one in twelve so openly and absolutely treacherous.

June 27, 1895.

You have received the papers about my accident. The papers embellished some, but the reality was serious enough. Happily God kept me quite collected. I just kept saying the Hail Mary and waiting for the result. I did not feel that there was probably danger of life. It was a closed hack and a strong one. I know you have joined me in thanksgiving to God. It was the Feast of the Sacred Heart and of Saint Aloysius.

The above is in reference to the running away of the horses while the Archbishop was going out of town on some important business. He seldom made use of a carriage, preferring in his humility to go on foot if at all practicable.

Ostentation was an unknown quantity in his calculations, as was proven by every act of his life.

To a writer explaining why country life is failing.

READING, June 27, 1895.

I would like to see what you wrote. The conditions of life are changing so much that new and perplexing questions are continually presented. It is well to discuss them from various sides. Divine Providence has its own design. It is our business to try to learn the designs and to co-operate for their fulfilment. The country life is growing more different, because the immense tracts in the west that are cultivated by steam power and other improvements which only rich men can afford, are making grain cheaper than individual farming can make it. At the same time the factories are breaking up the home life, and cheap amusements and cheap papers in the cities are enervating the young and destroying the love of steady labor, and the dignity of manhood and womanhood too. Well — these are some of the evils to work against: and you are doing a good work in drawing attention and suggesting remedies.

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

### Letter from Mexico.

TROPICO DE CANCER, October 10, 1895.

*My dear Friend,* — We are just passed into the torrid zone. A large stone pier at the side of the road bears on one side "Zona Templada" and on the other "Zona Torrida" with two hands pointing east and west and on the top "Tropico de Cancer." We have had a very pleasant journey; quite cool at night. Sleeping well and eating with appetite. At the station in New Orleans Bishop Byrne and I were joined by Rev. Wm. B——, Vicar General of Boston; and in San Antonio we met the Bishop of Natchez and Rev. I. Prendergast, whose mother I married in Natchez. I left him a chunky little boy five years old, and this is the first time I have seen him since. He will celebrate his first year of the Priesthood on the 24th.

Since early in the night we have been going through the table lands, — mountains on each side of us, and behind them other broad flats and other ranges of mountains alternately. Scarcely any vegetation around, but clumps of bush, from six inches to two feet high; and small palms; sometimes a little grass and sometimes the bare earth between the bushes. The flat that we are on varies from five miles wide to twenty. We are about seven hundred feet above the sea. We expect to reach San Luis de Potosi about two P. M. They use suntime here — thirty-six minutes slower than railroad time.

I want to write to B——, so I bid you good-bye, and I count on the continuance of your prayers.

The 11th.

I could not get any Mexican post stamps on the way. This morning we passed some of the most lovely valleys that can be seen; and reached the city about nine P. M. I am very pleasantly quartered at the house of B——, whose niece gave \$100,000 to redeem the fine old church of St. Francis, which had been confiscated by the government and sold many years ago. This evening we celebrate the First Vespers of the Feast.

The 12th.

I went off in a hurry and forgot to close this yesterday. We have had the grand Coronation. I wish I could tell you all.

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

But I commended you all to Our Lady of Guadalupe during the Pontifical Mass. And I will do so again, tomorrow, Pontifical Mass of Thanksgiving. After that I will go through the Church at leisure, and try to see the picture close by — though it is well seen from the Church.

Good-bye again.

Description of the picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

*My dear Child in Christ,* — It was something of a relief to me when I found you excusing yourself for not writing. I have been thinking for some time how I could excuse myself to you for not replying to your last. I enclose you a little copy of Our Lady of Guadalupe. It was for her coronation that I went to Mexico, taking the occasion to visit our Sisters of Charity in all the houses they have in New Mexico and Colorado.

I suppose you are familiar with the history of the picture. Apart from its miraculous origin it is a true wonder at the present day. Able painters have examined it and testified under oath that the colors have not been put on by any process that they know. It is not an oil painting; nor is it in "distemper" — colors mixed in light glue. It has no "priming" or foundation, but the colors are immediately on the threads of the texture. The texture is coarse, like a piece of bagging. Its very preservation for 360 years is a wonder. All the country around is an immense swamp, the climate damp and the air laden with salt-petre. The hill is a pile of rocks rising right out of the swamps. For 200 years the picture hung where hundreds of thousands kissed it and touched their beads to it. Yet there is no defacing, no obscuring of the colors and the shades. The two Angels above, and the crown they hold are not in the picture, but all the rest including the Crescent and the Angel's head under the feet, and the rays, and the clouds, are all in the picture. The four medallions in the corners represent the visions. The first when the Indians heard the songs of Angels, and saw the Blessed Virgin; the second, when on his knees he told the Blessed Virgin that the Bishop wanted to have a sign to know that the message was from her and she promised to give one when he came again;

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

the third, when he told her he hadn't time to stop, his uncle was dying, and he was going for a Priest. She told him she had cured his uncle, and he must go gather the flowers on the hill and take them to the Bishop; and the fourth, where he opens his cloak to show the flowers and finds the picture on his cloak.

Bless me! I am forgetting your letter. I approve all you have done and all that you propose.

Continue to pray for me. Also for my two invalid brothers in Louisiana. We are only three now. I go to see them Friday.

I give you my affectionate blessing, also to your Brother and family.

WILLIAM HENRY,

*Archbishop of Cincinnati.*

The Archbishop loved to recall this trip to Mexico. He would say, "I had not a single care. Bishop Byrne gave me all the attention a tender daughter could bestow on a devoted mother."

Consolation to a lady in difficulties.

*My dear Child in Christ,* — Yours of the 10th, inst. was very welcome. I had been thinking that you were sick, and I am sorry to learn that it is true. But God be praised in sickness and in health, "all things work unto good for them who are called to love God," and who correspond with His call. It is a happy thought that in this world we see only the wrong side of the tapestry — a confused and unintelligible medley of different colored threads and broken ends. In Heaven we shall see God's side of the work, and all eternity will not be too long to study and admire its beauties, and feel the rapture of contemplating its endless beauties. God grant that we be faithful to the end.

How much I feel interested in all that you tell me of your brother and sister-in-law and those dear children. I would indeed be glad if I could see more of them all. But God has His own ways. You just be faithful, and get them to try to be faithful

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

to the lights and graces they have; and God will lead them on. To all of you I wish the graces of Lent; and all the joys of Easter. Pray for me.

WILLIAM HENRY,  
*Archbishop of Cincinnati.*

To one in sorrow, who grieved immoderately.

St. Joseph's Day.

I came here yesterday afternoon, to bless the new Chapel, and to Consecrate the marble Altar, this morning. Interrupted just here for the functions and got home last night to find a big pile of letters, yours among them.

So you must just imagine all that I would say to you during this week. On Sat. I will offer Mass as I promised. You must put all your soul into your will and set your thoughts on Easter and all the joyful things of earth, that point to the boundless joys of Heaven. Now do this resolutely, and call Our Blessed Mother and St. Joseph to help you do it. Some yielding to poor human nature is pardonable — a few weeks, — perhaps months; — but at the end of a year you ought to resume the mastery. God never intended that the griefs of this life should be perpetual. We owe it to His munificent Goodness, to open our eyes and heart to the sunshine of His love, and to warm and rejoice ourselves in its light and warmth. Still more we owe it, because He so readily closes His eyes to our sins, — as soon as we return to Him in contrition. How can we refuse to lay aside our sorrowing over His chastisements? And take notice that our contrition cannot really take away the offence; — it is only God's mercy that is pleased to pardon it. So now, between St. Joseph's day and the Annunciation, just wipe away those tears and put on that smile and make fun for the young folks at home: and put courage into your own work, and brightness into your prayers and write a good merry letter to me.

WILLIAM HENRY.

Thanking for a copy of Tennyson.

[ 135 ]

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

CINCINNATI, January 3, 1896.

I thank you for your Christmas letter and for your Tennyson — very beautiful to nature. But oh! if he had the fulness of Faith! He would not have been driven to the incongruous figure of hoping for the Pilot after the bar was crossed. Oh! what an undeserved happiness for us, to have the Heavenly Pilot with us to prepare the voyage — and carry us across. What an account we will have to give for our use of this unspeakable mercy!

As for “disagreeable things,” you know you cannot have good lemonade without having the sour as well as the sweet. A Happy New-Year.

Patience! Angels are busy setting new jewels every minute into your crown — growing richer till it is finished. Did I ever tell you of the good old man whom I tried to comfort that way? After I had got through with my word picture of the Angels and the crown and his joy when it should be put on him, he said: “Thank you, Father — but indeed, if they should call me to take the crown as it is, I would forgive them the balance of the jewels.” But I am sure that now with his crown on, he would not lose one jewel of it for a year of suffering.

Encouraging a soul in distress, because suffering keeps us conscious of our nothingness.

CINCINNATI, December 14, 1896.

I was trying to write some words of comfort, and now that I look at the date of your letter, almost three weeks ago — I think you must have felt it hard that I left you so long without any reply — when you needed it so much. I have had a succession of disagreeable things myself in these last five weeks, each begetting perplexities which occupied both my mind and my time, to such extent that I have answered almost none of my private letters. Just now, thank God — though the occupation of my mind continues yet, I have a little more freedom of time, and I take this first day of it for you.

As for the perplexities and solicitudes they are a part of

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

life, and probably if we are faithful enough to save our souls, we shall find both in purgatory and in heaven, that these troubles are the most valuable part of all our lives. When we are working straight on and see the fruit of our works, and hear persons complimenting us, there is a good deal of natural satisfaction and not a little of the disposition to rob God by vain glory. But suffering either of body or mind keeps us conscious of our nothingness — besides its being the direct satisfaction for our sins, and the most efficient resemblance to Our Lord, and then sorrows of the heart serve a good purpose in loosening our hearts from all the persons and the things of life, and drawing them towards heaven; with the comfort that the very affections whose bruising causes so much pain — those same affections will all revive in the presence of God, and be all the sweeter and more glorious for the very pains they caused us here. Yes, the same hearts which now seem less warm to you than they used to be, will then burn with the strongest and the holiest love for you, all the more intense and lasting because of any pain they had given you here.

This letter is most instructive, not only to non-Catholics, but also to every one in the Fold who has not a clear understanding of the true position of the Pope in Politics. It is deserving of careful perusal.

*To the Editor of the "Commercial Gazette":*

### THE POPE IN POLITICS

The *Commercial Gazette* of last Monday, March 21st, contains an article from your able contributor, S. R. R., on "The Prominence of the Papacy." Will you permit me to offer some remarks on the same subject? It is not my purpose to enter into an argument, but to let your reader know what are the views of their Catholic fellow citizens, and the teachings of the church on some of the points treated in the article.

Catholics understand that there is a clear distinction between the Pope's teaching with authority what is true or false on mat-

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

ters of faith, what is right or wrong in matters of morals, and the Pope's giving his advice as to what is most wise or expedient in matters of concern for the peace of nations and the prosperity of society.

The famous letters, addressed by his direction to the Catholic leaders in Germany, carefully observed this distinction. They were not taught that it would be sin for them to oppose the septenate bill. They were informed that the sovereign pontiff had carefully considered the circumstances, and that he was convinced their supporting the bill would conduce to the peace of Europe, and to the interest both of their own religion and of all society; and, consequently, he advised them to do so. And we see that they clearly understood the distinction.

A very large number became satisfied that the Pope, in his position and with his opportunities of knowing what influences were at work in the various countries of Europe, and with his lofty elevation of views and perfect honesty of purpose, was the most eligible guide for them to follow, and they voted according to his counsel. Yet not a few of very prominent and very devoted Catholics remained convinced that their previous judgment of the bill was correct, and they voted against it or refused to support it. These still continue to be good and faithful Catholics; nor have any censures or disqualifications been visited on them.

As to the propriety of the Pope's giving counsel in matters of political administration, they see no reason why he should not do so when the deep interests of society are concerned. The readiness of so many to follow his advice is based on their experience of his wisdom and sagacity. And this very case has given a remarkable confirmation of this experience. If we look over the papers of two months ago, we see them filled, not only with rumors, but certain expectations of an imminent war, threatening to be the most general and the most destructive of modern times. No one saw any means of averting it. Now the whole is changed, and all Europe is congratulating itself on the prospects of continued peace — until some new trouble may arise.

The turning point was by general acknowledgment the successful passing of the Septenate bill in the German Parliament.

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

How that event led to such a result, various persons explain in various ways. But by common agreement, that vote in the Parliament was the occasion of the change. The papers tell us that the French people themselves rejoiced in the event. It is exactly this which has just now given such prominence to the Papacy, because men have new evidence in this case of the wisdom which guides the Holy See in its judgments of what is best for the interests of society.

The fact that this action in favor of peace has at the same time obtained a relaxation of the persecution under which the Catholics of Germany had been ground down during fourteen years, certainly does not lessen the praise he deserves for practical wisdom nor his claim to be regarded as a safe guide when he offers his guidance.

As to the line which separates the things of faith of morals and the things of political government, I believe not Catholics only, but all Christians and people generally understand that some political matter cannot be separated from morals, for the simple reason that political actions sometimes violate the laws of morals.

The political government of Utah was not only denounced as violating morals and sanctioning polygamy, but the political government of the United States has taken political measures for abolishing the immorality.

Catholics do not hold, and the Church does not teach, that the Pope may lay down the line of permission to the political administration. The only line of permission is that the political administration should not violate the laws of God. But this is laid down by God Himself, not by the Pope.

Catholics do not hold, and the Church does not teach, neither in practice nor in theory, that all temporal princes or governments hold their authority from the Pope. Their authority is based on the natural law, and derived from God. It is of the nature of men that they should live in society, and therefore should live under a government which may enforce order and protect the weak against the strong. In all ages, and in all parts of the world, governments exist wherever men live together, and they have authority to rule and to punish offenders.

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

St. Paul tells the early Christians that the authority of their civil rulers, pagans as they were, was a divine authority, and if they violated the civil law they sinned against God. "He that resisteth the power (of the civil government) resisteth the ordinance of God." Romans xiii. 2. Civil governments then hold their authority from the natural law, not from the Pope's permission.

If the Popes sometimes took part in setting aside one prince or ruler, and putting another in his place, it was not the theory that they all held their power by his permission. It was simply on the ground that he was the highest personage in Christendom; and in disputes between rulers and people they commonly had recourse to him as Supreme Judge.

In our courts of law judges are continually giving decrees by which property passes from one possessor to another. It is not on the theory that all men hold their property only by permission of the judge, but simply on the ground that they have recourse to him to decide disputes.

There were some governments, in the middle ages, which, for one reason or another expressly declared the Pope to be their political sovereign, or rather Suzerain; very much as some of the Balkan States now acknowledge a political supremacy in the Sultan or Czar. This was in each case an individual act of their own, whatever may have been the motive for it. It was not the result of a theory that all governments hold from the Pope. On the contrary, the very fact of those governments making this act of subjection shows that such subjection was not acknowledged nor claimed as a right of the Pope over all governments.

In regard to recent events in Ireland, the summons of Reverend Father Kelleher, his refusal to answer in court, and his imprisonment, we are only imperfectly informed about the grounds for his refusal, and therefore we cannot draw any certain inferences from it. I have not seen it stated that he pleaded the secrecy of the confessional. And I do not understand why your worthy contributor should go out of his way to drag the confessional into the question, and utter things so offensive to your Catholic readers as his gratuitous and odious suppositions about an institution which they revere as so sacred.

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

For the questions started in New York, your contributor says very correctly that the Papacy has pronounced no judgment on Mr. George's theories. It does not condemn theories of political economy unless they are opposed to justice or otherwise injurious to morals. Whether those of Mr. George are such or not, seems not yet clearly ascertained. As to the unfortunate priest, who has become so sadly conspicuous, he was removed from his charge by his Archbishop on account of his continued disobedience in matters clearly connected with his priestly duties.

The question of the Knights of Labor is still under consideration. If the Pope temporizes — it is clearly the part of a wise man to temporize, that is to delay rendering a judgment until the subject can be adequately known and maturely considered. But the regard of the Church for laboring men does not show itself in words alone. Her history is filled with her substantial and effective labors — not only to relieve them in distress, but to defend them from oppression, and to help them in elevating themselves morally, intellectually, and physically.

In offering these remarks, I do not undertake a disputation nor an argument. I have stated what Catholics hold, and what the Church teaches. I leave it to the readers to agree or disagree — as they judge best.

WILLIAM HENRY ELDER.

*Archbishop of Cincinnati.*

The following letter, dated September 2nd, 1904, just two months before his death, may have been the last his hand ever penned. Not having the permission to publish the name of the Protestant minister to whom it is addressed, we omit both the locality and the name of the recipient.

*Reverend Dear Sir,* — Your letter of the end of July was received. I owe you a deep apology for not answering it long ago. I did begin to write a reply in satisfaction of your points, but beside my eighty-five years of age, with its ordinary infirmities, I have had for many weeks past an unusual succession of

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

peremptory occupations, besides some calls away from home, during some weeks.

I thank you heartily for your courteous application to me; and I beg you not suffer my delay on this occasion to hinder you from further correspondence if I can do you service. I am not sure whether I understand correctly the terms you use; some of them being taken in different contexts.

1st, you ask: "Is the will of God in its relation to sanctification absolute as to its members of the One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church?"

I answer: The Catholic Church teaches that God's will for the sanctification of each individual soul is absolute in His determination to give the soul all the means that are requisite to enable him to save his soul, if he, in his free will, make use of the means which God puts in his reach.

2d, you ask: "Will the will of God be accomplished before death?"

I answer: Sanctification and justification for those who are justified, are accomplished before death; that is, justification with us means *being made just* that is pleasing to God, by the forgiveness of mortal sin (or of original sin in baptism); sanctification, *growing more holy* by increasing of acts of virtue, in number and in value.

All this, of course, is done during mortal life. After death, God gives the reward of faithful service.

3d: The above shows the meaning that Catholic teachers give to the words justification and sanctification. We may say justification is the beginning of sanctification, and sanctification is increase of justification.

4th: God creates all men and each individual for sanctification; but subject to his using the means necessary; that is, God's grace and the means for obtaining this grace. If of his free will, he does not use God's grace, or if having it in his power, he wilfully neglects to obtain it, he will be punished for his *wilful* neglect or disobedience. If the grace is not within his reach, as with infants dying before baptism, they will not be justified in the highest sense of the word; not made *children of God* by the infusion of God's grace. If they live and die without committing *wilful*

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

sin, they will not be punished like those who have wilfully committed mortal sin.

5th: What will be their condition in eternity, God has not been pleased to reveal to us; and the theologians have expressed different opinions. St. Thomas of Aquinas, who is commonly regarded by Catholic writers as our safest guide in matters not expressly revealed by God, holds that they will enjoy "natural happiness"; that is that all the natural inclinations of soul and body will be gratified as far as they may not hinder higher natural inclinations. Others think rather, that any who does his best according to his knowledge and power will not be denied the grace to know and to do what is necessary for seeing and possessing God with the blessed in Heaven. All however agree that God will not punish any one beyond what is justly deserved.

If something in my reply is deficient or obscure, I will be glad of an opportunity to explain or to add, in an oral interview. If you wish to obviate the danger of not finding me at home, I will be glad to arrange the time of your coming by telephone. My number is 2034. With all esteem,

Your servant in Christ,

W. H. ELDER.

This letter is most important, even to Catholics, as it clearly points out the fact that the Church does not teach definitely what is the condition of unbaptised souls in Eternity. How consoling is the thought suggested by the Archbishop's words — that God is supremely just and each soul's destiny is safe in His hands. "None will be punished beyond what he justly deserves."

Just one year before his death, a letter written by his niece, Madam Elder, of the Sacred Heart Academy, Cincinnati, contains her fear that his strength was failing. We quote these words:

"Uncle William seemed to recover from his illness of last Spring, but his age is telling, — in fact, he is not remembering

## **Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder**

---

little things. I think this is the reason he does not like to leave his own premises. There he has only certain rooms and has all the things in their places, and finds them easily.

"I have not been able to get him to stay at length with us, the delightful air and quiet surroundings would do him a world of good. At our Commencement he remained only a day; and for the Mass of the Holy Ghost, only one night.

"Though he now has a Co-adjutor things are not yet thoroughly settled, and so he is still busy, busy.

"He is simply a living saint, and I feel God is leaving him only for a little while to enhance his sanctity. At times, I think he will go suddenly. I fear the spring-time for him. My consolation is that he is ready and will go with full hands. I do not think he will be very long with us. He is so loved and revered here in this city — but I doubt not that his course is almost run, and that his time is near."

During the summer of 1904, the Venerable Archbishop went twice to New York, and once to St. Louis, although the weather was oppressively warm, and the journey tedious; but he never hesitated for a moment to undertake any trip however long or fatiguing, if duty called, or official courtesy required it, and never was a word of complaint or weariness heard from the energetic, tireless Archbishop.

Just a short while before his death, he was preparing for a trip to Washington in order to attend the Annual Meeting of the Archbishops of the United States. But that meeting saw of the holy prelate only his vacant chair.

"Never complaining of fatigue, however tiresome the journey, and always up the morning after the trip in time to say his six o'clock Mass —" these words of Father Gallagher, referring to these facts in the Archbishop's life, are peculiarly touching.

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

He also adds that he, Father Gallagher, had since his ordination served the Archbishop's Mass every morning, and hence could speak knowingly of his splendid endurance and unfailing piety.

One peculiarity of Archbishop Elder was his careful avoidance of giving trouble to any one connected with him. Once while spending the night with a near relative, he was asked what were his requirements for his morning toilet. "Nothing, nothing at all," was the reply. "But you need warm water for shaving etc." "No, not at all. I always use cold water so as to give no trouble to any one, and I find that it answers every purpose."

As an evidence of his wonderful vitality, — just ten days before his death, Archbishop Elder visited the Church of St. Rose, Fulton. He was the guest of Reverend Louis A. Tieman, at dinner, and remained to attend the lecture that evening given by Father Kress, to non-Catholics. In all these visitations his one intention was to give pleasure to his people, for he had become so dear to clergy and laity that his presence on any occasion always enhanced their happiness and their interest.

This feeling of reverence was shared by every one who knew Archbishop Elder, and later tributes to his worth and holiness expressed this thought in fullest measure.

A distinguished Catholic Editor wrote of him thus:

"Archbishop Elder possessed in an eminent degree the two essentials of a great churchman, holiness and learning. His character was of the highest, pure and noble in thought, kindly and charitable in action. Sincere himself, he never looked for an ulterior motive in others. He was an optimist at all times

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

and ever regarded the better side of men and the brighter aspect of events. He was always tolerant, and neither creed, color nor condition biased his beneficence. No creature was too lowly, none too degraded for his fatherly sympathy, or his practical charity."

A distinguished layman, General Ryan, pays this tribute to his memory:

"The Archbishop was very active to the end of his life. He loved to be busy, and not only did he find time to discharge his religious functions, and labor in the many charities with which he was connected, but he kept an eye on public affairs and joined in every movement that had for its object the welfare of the city. And while strong in his own convictions he preserved a tender respect for the beliefs and opinions of others. He was a great and good man, a true Christian and a pure patriot."

These words of General Ryan in regard to patriotism suggest Archbishop Elder's general order to the diocese at the outbreak of the Spanish war.

It was rumored that Catholics would not be willing to enlist in a war against a Catholic nation, and hence the following:

"Catholics have no need of lengthy instruction concerning their duty in time of war. They have been taught from childhood — that the service of their country, is a part of their service of God. St. Paul wrote to the Christians of Rome that the authority of their civil rulers was given by God and 'whoever resisteth that authority resisteth God.'

"God has made it of the nature of men that they shall live in society; society must have civil government. Hence God requires that the civil government be obeyed and served in all that is not sin. The power of declaring war is an essential attribute of sovereign authority, consequently Catholics understand very well that in time of war every one must do his full duty to his country, according to his state and his obligations, under pain of sin.

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

And sin is punished by God even if human penalties fail to reach it. I wish also to remind you that there is one service which every body owes to his country, and that is prayer."

The following is a sermon preached shortly before his death.

The Archbishop spoke from the gospel for the day, the parable of the Good Samaritan, and on the general subject of "Love." "In all our lives," said the preacher, "we should show first, love of God above all things, and, second, the love of our neighbor for God's sake. Love is the result of the impulse we have towards life, and God himself as the source of all life.

"But this impulse towards God must be sanctified and elevated. It is not sufficient that we should seek God merely from natural affection. We should seek God for the sake of God. In our lives we all feel the happiness of living in union, in love and harmony with those around us, and of wishing well to them and knowing that they wish well to us. This alone increases our joy, indeed makes the sum of all of our joy. All good things come from God, and we are naturally drawn towards God, but we must have God's own help to know the things that are in God.

"God shows love in everything that is around us. All things are made by the love of God, to help man to enjoy life and attain the end for which man was made, the glory of God. We are to love God's creatures, first, because they are all children of God; even those that have not reason are still creatures of God and are endowed with some of the goodness of Almighty God. Every creature has a participation in some of the attributes that Almighty God gives. The nearer they are to God the more attraction they have for us, the more we are to love them."

The Archbishop brought out the thought that every act of love was a comfort to Christ in the suffering which he wrought for humanity, because he could foresee each life, and knew even then what would result

## **Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder**

---

in every soul. So every evil act, done even now, contributed to the sorrow which he bore. The idea was also emphasized that every act had its internal as well as external aspect, and in the eyes of God the motive was considered.

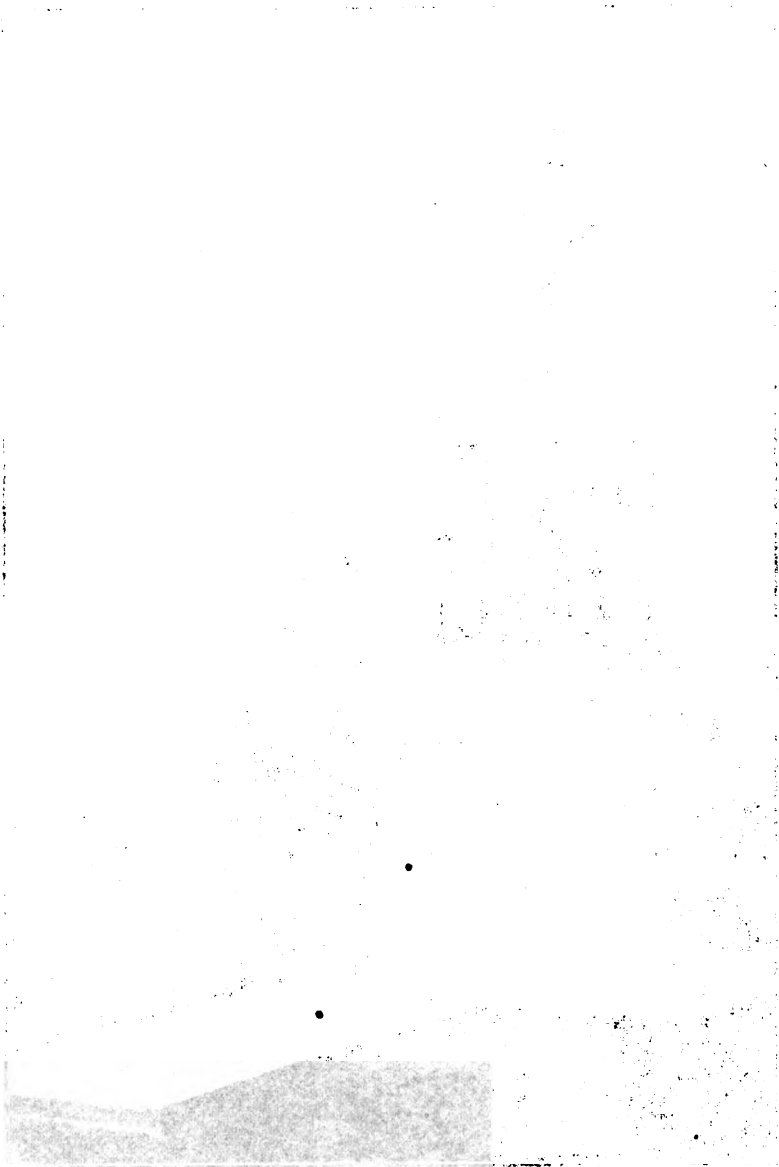
"Let us take care to love our neighbor in our conversation," he continued. "Here love may be shown many times, or the lack of it. To talk against our neighbor, speaking of his faults instead of considering our own is one of the most common acts showing the lack of love." The sermon closed with the hope that all his hearers might persevere in the ideal of love which Christ had set before them.

His chancellor for over twenty years, Reverend Henry Moeller, was appointed Bishop of Columbus in 1900. The Archbishop consecrated him with mingled joy and sorrow, for he felt the loss of his filial companionship deeply, yet rejoiced in the honors that had come to his young helper.

No one stood nearer to the Archbishop's heart than Bishop Moeller, and when in 1903, the Holy See named him as Co-adjutor to the Cincinnati diocese, with right of succession, the venerable Archbishop, whose hands were trembling under the weight of years and the burden of the Episcopate, felt grateful to God for restoring to him so filial and so capable an assistant.

A letter written to Bishop Moeller at this time seems to breathe a yearning for his presence.

Archbishop Elder in his long Episcopate had consecrated nine bishops, all of whom were near and dear to him; but his appeal to Bishop Moeller comes from a heart longing for the companion of twenty years to be once more beside him.



Frontier. The old, Fort Randall.

## THE GREAT-GRANDFATHER OF ARCHBISHOP ELDER

in every soul. So every evil act, done even in a trifling way, contributed to the sorrow which he bore. The lesson was of a gentle kind that every act had its inner as well as its outward aspect, and in the eyes of God it was always a consideration.

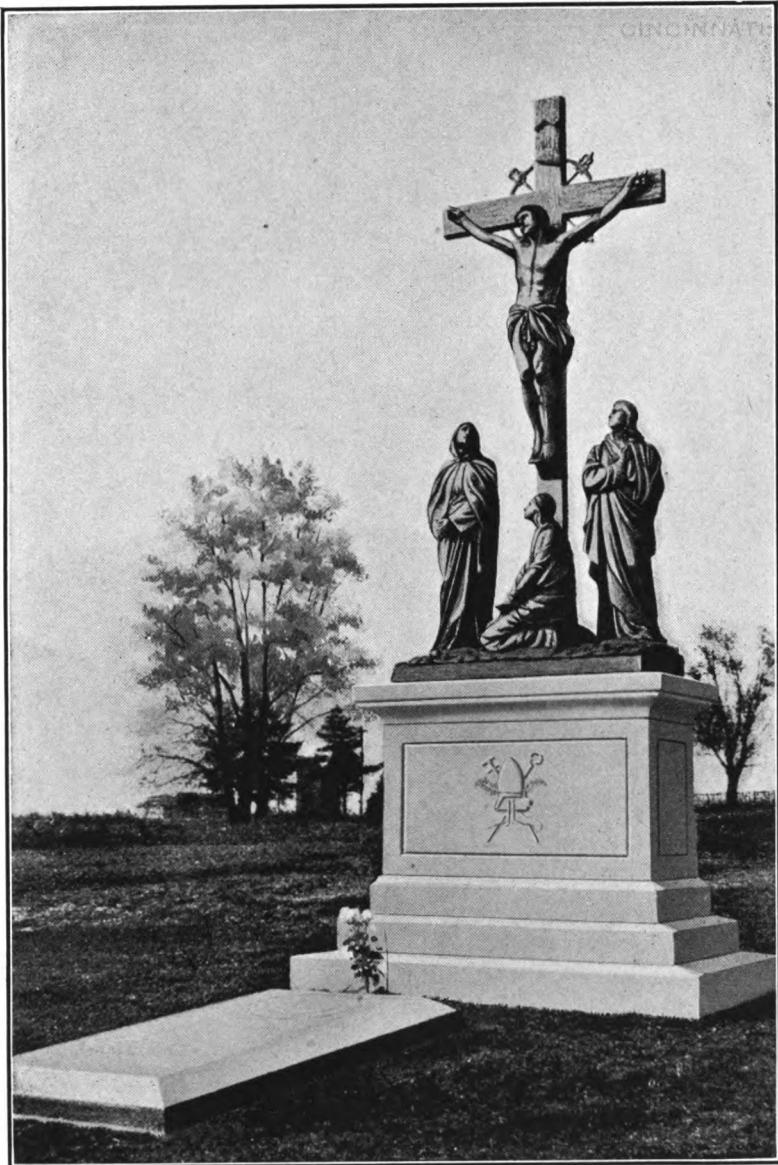
"It is as take care to love our neighbor in our conversation," he continued. "Here love may be shown many times, or the lack of it. To talk against our neighbor, speaking of his faults instead of considering his good is one of the most common acts showing the lack of love. The sermon closed with the hope that the people would be diligent in the ideal of love which was the law of God."

It was over twenty years, Reverend Father, that the late appointed Bishop of Cedarburg, Wisconsin, the Bishop consecrated him with nuncio. When he left the loss of his filled companion was felt, yet rejoiced in the honors that had come to his young helper.

No one was dearer to the Archbishop's heart than Bishop Mueller, and when in 1863, the Holy See raised him as Coadjutor to the Cincinnati diocese, with right of succession, the venerable Archbishop, whose hands were trembling under the weight of years and the burden of the episcopate, felt grateful to God for restoring to him a faithful and so capable an assistant.

A letter written to Bishop Mueller at this time seems to breathe a yearning for his presence.

Archbishop Elder in his long Episcopate had consecrated nine Bishops, all of whom were near and dear to him, but his appeal to Bishop Mueller comes from a heart longing for the companion of twenty years to be once more beside him.



**Archbishop Elder's Grave, Cincinnati, Ohio**



## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

May 4, 1903.

RIGHT REVEREND HENRY MOELLER, *Bishop of Columbus.*

*Right Reverend, and very dear Friend,* — I suppose I should use the old title yet. But I hope the new one will be verified soon. I need not say how much solid comfort I am feeling in the anticipation of having you with us again.

I am writing very little now. My fingers are not as supple as they used to be. Please come as soon as you have authority to do so. And please telegraph me as soon as you learn it.

God be praised for all his mercies, — one of the very greatest was His sending you to me, at the very beginning, and now to be redoubled, as I trust, by your return. Remember me in Holy Mass.

WILLIAM HENRY.

*Archbishop, Cincinnati.*

Soon after the Co-adjutor was installed in his new dignities, a photograph was taken of the two Archbishops which was singularly beautiful and pathetic. Archbishop Elder, aged and feeble, is seated in his arm-chair, while Archbishop Moeller, in the very prime of manhood, is standing by his side. The expression of the venerable prelate is one of peace and pride in the help that has come to him in his battles against wrong. Archbishop Moeller's look is one of loving kindness, of filial readiness to aid and cheer this holy veteran of the Church's army as long as God so wills it.

The contrast between the two Archbishops is very striking. Youth and age! Strength and feebleness! The morning and the evening of life! One facing the sunrise of hope, the other calmly awaiting the sunset of peace; but the two, father and son, were alike in zeal for righteousness and in loving sympathy for their fellow-men.

## **Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder**

---

Archbishop Henry Moeller is a Cincinnati born and raised in the midst of his present surroundings. He was but fifty-years old when the venerable Archbishop Elder rested his eighty-five years of care upon his young shoulders, and well have they borne the burden, and surely will he walk in the road on which he entered in 1876, a true priest of God, a worthy successor of him whom he cherished to the last.

When Archbishop Elder passed away from human sight, Archbishop Moeller became, at that moment, the spiritual ruler of Cincinnati's vast diocese; for his was, by Rome's papal commission, the right of succession to this important See.

It was a singular coincidence that the Institution which Archbishop Elder visited last was the first which he called upon when he came to Cincinnati in 1880.

He attended a reception at Mt. St. Vincent Academy, Cedar Grove, April, 1880, the first function arranged for him, and with which he was much pleased.

And on Thursday, October 27th, 1904, he again visited the Academy — his last active deed here below, for death then was very near. But before that sorrowful day came, his zeal seemed to redouble in behalf of his people. He went frequently to the meetings of the laity, and always entered into the spirit of their work with a cordiality and goodwill which gave encouragement and hope for the future.

The Ohio Humane Society, for many years, was honored by his wise counsels, and was always a recipient of his generous donation; and this addition to his manifold burdens revealed the tenderness of his heart towards the helpless and distressed.

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

During the last few months of his earthly existence, the Archbishop appeared to pay little attention to the things of this world. Asked one day about a certain matter in which it was supposed he was particularly interested, he answered: "I do not remember. I can think of nothing but God."

The Archbishop's last appearance, as before stated, was at the joint Diamond Jubilee of the Cedar Grove Academy and the local order of the Sisters of Charity, on Thursday October 27th, 1904.

He marched in the Jubilee procession, and presided over all the functions of the day. It was noticed however and commented upon at the time, that the Archbishop seemed more feeble than usual, but this was thought to be due to the unusual excitement attending the celebration. After the Pontifical Mass, the whole party repaired to Mt. St. Joseph — five miles distant. The Archbishop remained over night and celebrated Mass Friday morning in the Chapel of the Mother House. This was his last Mass — and when bidding the Community goodbye, and while imparting his blessing, there blended with his words a tone of sadness, as though expressive of a long farewell.

Sister Mary Agnes, Superior of Cedar Grove, referring to his sacerdotal robes on that occasion, said:

"Archbishop Elder came in his robes of state. In his Cappa Magna, of deep purple silk, lined with scarlet, his mitre and beautiful lace, he made an ideal picture of a Church dignitary. 'It will please the children,' he said, looking down at his regal train, and softly sighing, 'but it covers a multitude of sins.'

"He was so weak he could hardly stand, yet he remained erect for more than an hour, while the girls knelt before him for his blessing. His face shone with an unearthly radiance as

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

he clasped his thin hands above their bowed heads and blessed them. I was surprised, at the time, when he added a special blessing for their parents and their homes, but I think now, he saw the end approaching."

And the end was very near — yet these good Sisters who had been the first to give filial greeting, the first to speak kindly words of welcome to the new Bishop of Cincinnati, in 1880, little knew that to them, to their Religious Order, he was giving his last benediction, his last farewell! for them he said his last Mass!

Returning from Mt. St. Joseph Friday morning, he retired to his room shortly after dinner, and while there, probably before three o'clock he suffered a fainting spell, and was found by two of his devoted priests, Father Magevney and Father Bailey, lying on the floor cold, and in a semi-comatose condition. The fatigue and exposure of the night before, it was thought brought on an attack of Grippe. His condition became so serious that it was deemed advisable to administer, the same evening, the last sacraments. When informed of this by Father Magevney, he answered, "Yes, Father, you know best." Father Magevney then heard his confession, and administered the last Sacraments. During the time of the anointing, he was with difficulty kept awake and after this solemn ceremony was ended, he fell into a deep stupor, and the attending physician, Dr. W. E. DeCourcy, announced that there was little hope of recovery.

Saturday, he was conveyed to the Seton Hospital, where every attention was bestowed upon him. He was entirely conscious — no complaint, no remonstrance was uttered. The same lovable disposition and gentle consideration which so strongly marked him throughout

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

his long and active career still shed their halo about his person.

His extreme age, it was feared, would count against him; but the splendid vigor of his constitution, the result of a regular and abstemious life, would it was hoped at least enable him to make a long and a strong fight for life. But this was not to be. Strength gradually ebbed away — the holy Archbishop growing weaker hour by hour. The kindly smile, his benevolent look stayed with him to the last, but hand and voice lost effort, — and hope died out of the hearts of the watchers.

When Reverend Father Gallagher asked him if he was suffering, he smilingly whispered: — “I have not an ache or pain — I am simply weak, lying here awaiting the Will of the Almighty.”

Sunday, the 30th of October, was an anxious day for his people, and in every Church, and in every home, earnest prayers were offered up for his recovery. Countless enquiries came from priests and laity to know if there was any hope of his being spared to them.

Monday, the 31st, brought no encouraging news and all hearts were athrill with sad anticipations. Towards evening, almost complete exhaustion set in, leaving the slender form lying quiet and almost motionless on the couch. The same gentle, satisfied and satisfying spirit that made his very presence a benediction was his, as he lay calm and contented, while the feeble flame of life flickered in its struggle against extinguishment. The peace that passeth all understanding filled his pure soul, and gave even his wan smile an assurance of comfort to the grieving ones around him.

## **Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder**

---

His beloved Co-adjutor stood beside him as life ebbed away, — Sister Agnes Regina, Sister Victoria, and Sister Mary Agnes knelt in prayer, — his clergy gathered around him, all offering prayers for him who prayed so much for them.

The dying prelate stretched out his feeble hand for the crucifix lying near; but was unable to hold it in his clasp. Archbishop Moeller, whose loving face was the last on which he gazed, held the crucifix within the trembling hand and guided it to his pallid lips; then peacefully as if sinking to slumber the soul of the Archbishop left its tenement of clay, so slight the change, so calm the features that not until Archbishop Moeller raised his hand did the group about the bed know that all was over.

The slender fingers relaxed their hold, and as Father Gallagher so tenderly expressed it, — “like a saint dying as he lived,” he went to meet his God. The Cathedral chimes struck 11.55 P. M. as his pure soul passed from earth, “just in time, to enter Heaven on the Feast day of all the Saints.”

October 31st, 1904, was the day of his departure, and only three days of quiet suffering, of perfect resignation, of sublime peacefulness, had been meted out to the venerable patient. Could he have chosen the time and the circumstances, they could not have been more in keeping with his humility, his fear of giving trouble, his loving gratitude to all who served him.

The last act of his life was the kiss on his crucifix; the last words and entreaty that the Mother of His Saviour would pray for him “now and at the hour of his death.” The sweet smile which always characterized his holy face lingered there. His eyes, always

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

bright and piercing, looked kindly on all his dear ones, until their light went out. His hand, so often raised in greeting and in benediction, lay lifeless on his breast; one sigh, one long-drawn breath, and the saint on earth had joined the saints in heaven.

An Apostolic Bishop! This was the outburst from every heart that knew him. Apostolic in his zeal for souls; Apostolic in his charity towards his neighbor; Apostolic in his simplicity of life; in his deep humility; in his avoidance of all personal pomp or ceremony; in his aversion to praise or flattery; and in his gentle courtesy to the poor. An Apostolic Bishop! No word can be added to this. It recalls the mildness of St. Francis de Sales and the firmness of St. Thomas à Becket. It speaks of the charity of St. Charles Borromeo and of the dignity of St. Ambrose. And Archbishop Elder possessed in no small degree the heroic virtues of these Apostolic Bishops.

### GLOOM OF GRIEF PERVADES HOUSEHOLD

Pathetic scenes, incident to the ebbing of Archbishop Elder's life, abounded at the Cathedral residence, where grief was now written on the faces of all the employees.

Courteous and gentle with all, Archbishop Elder had been especially so with those in his employ. Their spiritual and physical welfare were always objects of his solicitude. The tear-dimmed eyes of Miss Margaret Gratton, who for years had answered the bell, gave mute testimony of her veneration for the aged Archbishop, and her sorrow at his illness.

"We all loved him — how could we help it?" said

## **Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder**

---

engineer F. K. McKeown. "There wasn't one of us but would jump at the chance of doing something for the Archbishop. He was so kind to all. Only last week I put up some lights for him, and after thanking me, he said: 'I will not use them long.' I little thought then of the significance of that remark."

Michael Moran, sexton at St. Peter's Cathedral, although he had been employed there less than a year, had striking proof of Archbishop Elder's kindly heart. Moran was just out of the Good Samaritan Hospital, where he had to undergo an operation. "When I was taken ill it was Archbishop Elder who was most solicitous about my condition and who insisted that I go to the hospital," said Moran. "While there all my expenses were paid by his generous hand. He was the same kind loving man all the time."

The funeral of the Archbishop was, according to the papers of the day, an unprecedented event in Cincinnati. The body lay in state in the chapel of the Seton Hospital for three days, and then was removed with solemn ceremonies to the Cathedral. It was calculated that over ten thousand people gathered in the vicinity of Seton Hospital to witness the translation of the prelate's remains.

The solemn services in St. Peter's Cathedral took place in the presence of the largest and most distinguished gathering of clergy and laity ever assembled in the Queen City of the West.

The coffin was borne from the hospital to the Cathedral Sunday afternoon, escorted by delegates from almost every Catholic society in the city, and the Franciscan Fathers began to chant the Office of the

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

dead as soon as the venerated remains were placed within the Church.

The public were then admitted, the Knights of Columbus standing as guards about the casket, and directing the people to file past the catafalque so that all could see the revered face and form of the dead Archbishop.

It was near midnight when the long line came to an end.

The only floral offerings allowed upon the bier were an exquisite shield of rare flowers from the Natchez diocese of which William Henry Elder had been Bishop for twenty-three years, and a palm branch tied with purple ribbon bearing the words:

"Token of deepest love to my Uncle, Most Reverend Archbishop Elder, from his devoted niece, Frances Elder."

Mother Elder, Superior of the Sacred Heart Academy, Clifton, denied herself the pious consolation of attending her Uncle's funeral in strict obedience to the rules of her Order; although Archbishop Moeller granted her full dispensation for this occasion. Like her Reverend Uncle, love of sacrifice and fidelity to duty were the predominant feelings of her heart.

A tribute paid to Archbishop Elder's memory by another kind religious, Sister Agnes Regina, Superior of the Seton Hospital, is very strong in its simplicity:

"All the beautiful things people are saying about him are truths long known to those who had his friendship. Surely everybody loved him."

"In his reverence for womankind, his devotion to the Church, and his spotless private character, he stood alone."

Throughout the following day, crowds continued

## **Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder**

---

to pass through the aisles to view the dear friend and father of his people. At times the doors had to be closed to allow those within to pass out. The papers of the day reported that there may have been 30,000 persons in the Cathedral to take a last look at the Archbishop's saintly countenance.

At the requiem Mass, the music was the sweet and solemn Gregorian Chant for male voices only, rendered by 150 students of Mt. St. Mary's Seminary. This was the music recommended by Pope Pius X; and some years ago, Archbishop Elder was one of the first prelates to institute a diocesan music Commission, and to give strict orders for the revival of the Gregorian Chant in his churches and seminaries.

The funeral sermon was preached by Archbishop Keane of Dubuque, Iowa. Many extracts from it have been given throughout these pages; but apart from its beautiful tribute to the dead prelate, it is a model of eloquence and fervor.

Archbishop Keane is one of the finest orators in the Catholic Church; and any address from this gifted speaker is a treat to any one who reads or listens. His sermon was a grand epitome of the life and virtues of Archbishop Elder.

The funeral oration of Archbishop Keane, of Dubuque, Iowa, was as follows:

“O man of God, fly earthly desires, and pursue justice, godliness, faith, charity, patience, mildness. Fight the good fight of faith; lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art called, and has confessed a good confession before many witnesses. I charge thee before God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who gave testimony under Pontius Pilate, a good confession, that thou keep this commandment without spot,

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

blameless, until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.' 1 Timothy vi. 11.

"In the year 1846, William Henry Elder was ordained priest in Rome. It was the year of the death of Gregory XVI, and the election of Pius IX. The signs of the times then indicated momentous events near at hand. Looking out over Christendom from its central point, the Eternal City, thoughtful observers could already note a great unrest in the mind of the world, and could hear the first mutterings of that titanic struggle between the revolution and the Church, which so filled the Pontificate of Pius IX, with anguish as to deserve for him the motto: 'Cruz de Cruce.'

"Of the numerous band of young men who that morning knelt around the altar of St. John Lateran to receive on their shoulders the yoke of the Lord, the weighty burden of the Christian priesthood, many were looking forward to those troublous times and wondering what would be their share in the coming conflict. Not so young Elder. His mental gaze reached far beyond the field of strife to his beloved America, where scarce an echo of the contest would be heard, to his own dear Baltimore, where the Church was blissfully unconscious of the embarrassments resulting from centuries of outworn conditions in the old world.

### *Returned to America*

"During his years of preparation for the holy priesthood, he had many a time pondered that admonition given by St. Paul to his disciple Timothy. And seeing in America conditions almost as primitive as those of the early Christians he took to himself, on that morning of his ordination, the command of the great apostle, and vowed that it should be the rule of his life. Earthly desires he would have none. Justice and godliness, faith and charity, these should be his only wealth. In patience and mildness he would fight the good fight of faith, knowing no enemies save the darkness of error and the perniciousness of sin that would lead God's people astray from eternal life. Dangers and difficulties he might meet; but his trust would be in God, the author of life, and in Christ Jesus, who gave His life

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

for His sheep. Temptations he might encounter, but, with the help of God, he would keep his priesthood without spot, blameless, until the coming of Christ the Judge. Such was his promise on the day of his ordination. And now that Christ his Judge has come we are gathered here around his mortal remains, not only to pray for his eternal peace and happiness, but also to testify how faithfully and well that promise has been kept during these eight and fifty years.

"After his return to America he spent ten years in the occupation most congenial to his heart, the training of young men for the priesthood in Mt. St. Mary's College. He was glad to be back in the alma mater of his boyhood; but still more was he glad and thankful that his first occupation in the holy ministry, was to pour into the minds and hearts of other young Levites that priestly spirit which himself, during his years of preparation, had imbibed from the heart of St. Paul. Those were precious years, both for him and the college. For him, they were years of deeper study and profounder meditation on the sublime truths which the priesthood has to teach the world, and on the Christ-like spirit which the priesthood has to breathe into mankind. And the influence of his saintly example on the life of the college, the inspiration of the sweet and gentle, yet sturdy and manly and straightforward, holiness which shone forth, unostentatiously, but yet powerfully, from his daily conduct, was an uplifting influence for both teachers and scholars, which went far to strengthen the reputation of the grand old institution as the mother not only of worthy priests, but of great Bishops.

### *Went to the South*

"Such a man was evidently meant by Divine Providence to be not a soldier in the ranks but a leader in 'the good fight of faith.' All too soon for his own humility and love of retirement, he was called to be one of the prelates so heroically engaged in pushing forward the confines of Christ's sheepfold in our country. He was put in charge of the church in the State of Mississippi. In its area of nearly 47,000 square miles it is computed that there are even to-day less than 22,000 Catholics; whence we can conclude how scanty was, nearly fifty years ago, the scat-

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

tered flock that God entrusted to his care. But he yielded neither to murmur nor discouragement; his sheep were more numerous than those that Jesus the Good Shepherd had to follow Him during the years of his earthly ministry, and he gave Himself to them with all the more devotedness because they were so few — yes, and so poor.

“As untiring in his zeal as the Apostles themselves, he carried into every nook and corner of that vast territory the light and sweetness, the restraining power, the molding influence, the uplifting consolations of our holy religion. Year after year his presence was welcomed in every little mission of the diocese, no matter how remote and difficult of access. To Catholics and non-Catholics alike he became an object of veneration. White and black equally loved him as their father in God. And many a poor priest discouraged by his loneliness, his privations and the apparent sterility of his endeavors, had his courage revived by the tender sympathy and untiring devotedness of this apostolic Bishop.

“How well we all remember his bustling, cheery manner, his beaming genial smile, his strong manly, unaffected voice, the sunshine in his presence that was felt wherever he entered. We can well believe that it was a very benediction from heaven for both pastors and people in all his diocese. And how often we wondered at that combination in him of apparently opposite qualities which, while bringing his personality down in tenderest simplicity to the level of the lowliest, yet made him always so mindful of that apostolic dignity which should ever characterize the office of the episcopate.

### *During the Civil War*

“Ere long his heart was wrung and the difficulties of his position were enormously enhanced by the outburst of the Civil War. He loved his country with the disinterested affection of the patriots of old. He mourned that the glorious Union, of which he had been always so honestly proud, should be thus suicidally disrupted. His soul was steeped in bitterest sorrow, when the field of his apostolic labors became one of the chief

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

battlefields of the contending forces. Whatever Christ-like zeal and charity could do, he did to alleviate the horrors of war for the living and to bring the mercies of God to the dying, irrespective of party or of side. The boys in gray and the boys in blue were all the same to his fatherly heart. He could not settle the quarrel between them; but, whether their cause were right or wrong, they were all equally honest, and they were all equally dear to him. In this spirit he labored among them; and in this spirit he breathed into the devoted band of priests and sisters who toiled under his direction for the bodily and spiritual welfare of the combatants.

“Such a man ought to have been beyond the reach of partisan animosity. But he was not so fortunate. A Union official issued a decree that in all Churches, prayers should be offered for the President of the United States and the success of the Union arms. Bishop Elder saw at once that this order could not be obeyed. Whatever might have been his own personal convictions, he knew that to submit to such a decree would be to offer insult to the people among whom his lot had been cast. Moreover, the soul of the Bishop arose in honest indignation against the upstart, who pretended to dictate what the worship in the Churches should be. At first he expostulated with the gentleness of argument that ought to have convinced a reasonable adversary.

“But when the command was reiterated, with all the bitterness of both partisan hatred and religious bigotry, then the Bishop recalled the warning of St. Paul that, in the hour of trial and danger, the man of God must remember the God, who giveth life and the Saviour who suffered under Pontius Pilate. In the majestic dignity of that thought he told the petty tyrant that his behest could not and would not be obeyed. And when angry words were followed by threats and violence, the gentle Bishop showed that he had both the courage of a man and the heart of a martyr, and went with unflinching calmness to exile and virtually to prison. Such an outrage could have but one result; his sentence was soon revoked, and no such folly was afterward attempted.

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

### *A Yellow Fever Hero*

"When the war was ended, no man in all the land was gladder than he to see the stars and stripes waving once more over a united country. And none labored more assiduously to draw out the thorns that still rankled in the very flesh of the Southern people, to quench the flames which, under the extreme harshness of reconstruction measures often threatened to blaze forth afresh, to secure the final victory of American fair play and fraternity. He saw it at last, and he thanked God in the name of the South and in the name of America.

"But how his fatherly heart bled when his afflicted people, just struggling out of the devastation everywhere resulting from the war, were smitten with the dire pestilence of the yellow fever! Once more the saintly heroism of the good Bishop shone forth, if possible with even brighter radiance. Again he raised his eyes to God who is Master of life, and to Jesus the Good Shepherd, who laid down His life for His sheep; and among all the peststricken multitude no angel visitor was more welcome than he. By day and by night he was everywhere among them, cheering their drooping hearts with his unfailing smile and his words of solace, snatching the sufferers from the jaws of death when that was possible, and guiding them into the haven of God's mercy when death had to be met.

"And lo! in the midst of these devoted labors, the burning hand of the pestilence was laid on himself, and he fell in the midst of his horror-stricken people. Then he gave them by his example the lesson he had been giving them by his words of counsel and good cheer, the lesson of suffering, and if need be, dying, with the soul looking lovingly up into the face of God. And it did, indeed, seem as if the shadow of the great angel's wings was upon him, as if the coming of Jesus, his judge, toward which he had been looking all these years, was indeed at hand. But the Divine Master had more work for him to do; and the faithful servant, as he took up again the burdens of life, said like St. Martin, 'Domine, non recuso laborem.'

### *The Purcell Failure*

"But would he have said it so bravely had he foreseen the task for which Providence was reserving him? Disaster had

## **Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder**

---

fallen on the church in Cincinnati, financial disaster such as to appall the stoutest hearts and fill them with a sense of despair. Thousands of the honest and trusting poor were being sucked down in the whirlpool, and they reached their hands in anguished supplication to their chief pastor, and clung to his garments that they might not sink — nay, cried out in their despair, whether rightly or wrongly, that the responsibility rested mainly on him, and that he must save them! No wonder that their broken-hearted shepherd, when he came to understand, even partially, the nature and magnitude of the disaster, threw up his hands in powerlessness, and uttered that wail which touched every heart throughout the land. And no wonder that soon the grave received him to its shelter.

“In such a tempest who could be asked to take the helm? Who could be trusted to hold it? Who could be induced to accept the trust? The most worldly wise stood hopeless, paralyzed. No one could meet the emergency but a man of God, one who, in spirit and the name and the power of Christ himself could command the winds and waves and bring the calm. Bishop Elder was a man of Providence for the occasion. He laid no claim to special financial skill; but he was filled with the spirit of Christ; he would meet the disaster just as Christ would meet it; among the frenzied sufferers he would be just what Christ himself would be. This was the only solution adequate to the vastness of the evil. Bankers and lawyers might do, and assuredly would do all that prudence and ingenuity could devise; but for the controlling of the situation naught but the power of Christ could suffice. Therefore, Archbishop Elder was commanded by the Pope, and by the overruling Providence of God, to take the helm and still the storm. It needed all his spirit of submission, of faith and trust, to bow to such a command. Prostrate before the Lord he exclaimed: ‘Master, this is not my work, but Thine; these are not my interests that are at stake, but Thine. Do Thou the work, and use me only as Thy poor instrument!’

### *His Potent Influence*

“Who, but his guardian angel, and the angels of the myriads to whom he had been father, counselor, comforter, helper, could

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

worthily recount what these last twenty-four years of his life have been? Who, but his Divine Master could tell how potent has been his Christ-like influence in restoring calm to the tempest-tossed Church. How gladly would the hundreds of his clergy and the thousands of his people speak out, if circumstances permitted, and proclaim how the restoration of peace and prosperity to the Diocese of Cincinnati is, under God, chiefly owing to the Christ-like patience, wisdom, and holiness of dear, good Archbishop Elder.

"We all expected to see him break under the strain. But no! we always found in him the same sweet, gentle smile, the same deep calm strength, the same unruffled composure. We could not but ask, 'Is it that he does not comprehend the magnitude of the evil?' Ah, it was not that; he comprehended it fully enough. It was because now, above all, he was gathering strength and guidance and consolation from that lesson taught him by St. Paul on the day of his ordination. It was in the spirit of the 'man of God' that he rose to the level of the situation. It was by the strength of a soul emptied of all earthly desires and filled with 'justice, godliness, faith, charity, patience, and mildness,' that he was day by day upheld under the crushing load. It was the daily and hourly remembrance of the 'God who quickeneth all things,' and of Christ Jesus before Pontius Pilate that nerved him and brought him safe through. It was not the judgments of men that guided him, but the unceasing vision of 'the coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ!' the Eternal Judge. It was this that upheld him and consoled him and led him on step by step, until the blessed moment when the Divine Master did indeed come and say to him: 'Well done, good and faithful servant.'

"And now, 'though dead, he still speaketh.' As from this sacred presence we glance back over his career, we recognize that it has a lesson for us all; especially for us his comrades in the holy priesthood. Let our hearts then listen to the mute eloquence of those silent lips.

### *Lesson of His Career*

"We understand as fully as we could wish that through the loving mercy of Divine Providence we have been chosen

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

to be, in the words of the great apostle, 'ministers of Christ and dispensers of the mysteries of God!' And we trust that it is our chief desire and aim, as it surely was his, to so live, as the Apostle warns us, that men may consider us as just that and nothing else, as Christ's ministers, and the dispensers of God's mysteries only. And yet are we not often puzzled to determine what manner of priestly life and what line of priestly work will best fulfill that aim, will most redound to the glory of God and the good of mankind? We know that history presents to us various types of the ideal priest, of the great churchman, and it is but natural that often it should be difficult to choose between them. But from the life and the death which we are now contemplating, there beams forth a light which makes the solution clear and our choice easy.

"A time there was when the church had to win the tribes of men from barbarism and its way of rudeness, violence, and error, and to form the nations in the mold of Christian civilization. Then the great ecclesiastic was he, who could best control the tribe by controlling its chieftain, who could best guide the nation by guiding its legislative councils. His fitting place was then close to the ear of the king or high among the lords in Parliament. The statesman priest was then the ideal churchman, and could do the grandest work for Christ and for Christendom.

"By degrees we see that formative period come to an end, and we behold the evolving of another epoch, whose chief characteristic is the self-sufficiency of the nations. A wave of secularism has passed over the earth. Governments and Legislatures declare that their functions concern only the interests of this world, and are to be directed solely by its rules and principles. The statesman ecclesiastic has no more work to do, nor are we sorry for his passing.

### *Spirit of Secularism*

"But the spirit of secularism goes further still. It goes so far as to declare that Christ and God are no longer necessary to human life or human thought; that to the theological epoch and the metaphysical epoch of humanity has now succeeded the scientific epoch, the epoch of facts, the epoch of positivism, of human-

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

ism, of agnosticism. Such was the spirit of the eighteenth century, such largely the spirit of the nineteenth century likewise. Then the ideal ecclesiastic was the scholar, the one who, like Lacordaire or Wiseman, could refute materialism and demonstrate to the intellect of his age the truth of God and of Christ, and the necessity of the Christian religion as the rule of human life and the soul of human society.

"The epoch of negation has not yet entirely passed away. The scholar-priest is still a great need to the church and to the world. But mankind has moved on and has entered, or is entering, into another epoch. Philosophism, in all its forms of sophistical negation, has had its day. Revolutionism, destructionism, no longer appeals to the intellect of the world. Mankind see that what the world needs is not the destructionism of negation, but the construction of wisdom. They are asking where that wisdom is to be found. Nay, they already know — for the plain lesson of all history cannot be ignored, that it can be found nowhere but in Christ the light of the world. Against that manifest truth all sophistry is powerless. As soon as the world begins to think in its heart, it can think only Christ. It strains its eyes and reaches out its arms for Christ. It asks: 'Where is he?'

"And it wants Him, not in speculative theory or learned demonstration, but in concrete living reality. It wants the Christ of the Incarnation, the Christ of Bethlehem and Nazareth, the Christ who 'went about doing good.' It wants to touch, not only His garment, but His hand and His heart. They want to see Him and feel Him right down among the people. For this is the age of democracy, when every man counts in the nation's life as well as in the records of eternity, and when the aim of the wise ecclesiastic must be, not the ear of the king or his parliament, but the ear and the heart of each individual man.

### *Personal Holiness*

"To-day, therefore, the great ecclesiastic is he who best embodies the spirit of Christ in his life, and best knows how to bring that spirit to bear on the life of the people. Whatever other great qualities he may possess, holiness must be the foundation

## **Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder**

---

of them all, will alone secure for him honor among the people, will alone make his ministry efficacious for the world's good. In a word, the great ecclesiastic to-day is the saint; to him alone will the world look for guidance and come for healing.

"This is the lesson of Archbishop Elder's life. Before bidding us to-day his last farewell, he, with all loving simplicity and humility, lays that lesson in our hands, and begs us keep it there as the soul of all our life henceforth. And we, with reverent affection, welcome it, and promise him that we shall keep it sacredly and strive to follow it faithfully.

"And now, while offering up the closing prayers of this solemn service, imploring the Just Judge to be lovingly merciful to His good old servant, we shall also beg for ourselves a larger share of the priestly, saintly spirit which so signally shone forth in all his life. We shall beg that we, too, may be 'men of God,' far removed from all earthly desires; pursuing justice, godliness, faith, charity, patience, mildness, brave in the good fight of faith holding firmly to eternal life; and that, for the love of God who quickeneth all things, and of Christ who died for us, we may keep His commandment without spot, blameless, until the coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ."

The scene of the funeral procession was impressive beyond human words.

The Archbishop desired to be buried among his people, his beloved clergy; and not in the Church, not beneath the altar of his grand Cathedral, — although it was within its walls he had served God faithfully for twenty-four long holy years. Thousands who could not enter the crowded temple, waited outside to accompany the hearse with its precious casket, to Price Hill, where, in the center of the priests' lot, the purple-lined open grave was waiting for its treasure.

That procession is also beyond human words to describe. The Cardinal, the Archbishops, thirty-five Bishops, the Catholic clergy from all parts of the large

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

Cincinnati Province, which embraces Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Kentucky, and Tennessee, distinguished laymen, representatives from every walk in life, took part in this last triumph of the holy prelate.

As the last ceremonies were performed, a trumpeter sounded the mournful notes of "taps," recalling the war-record of the heroic Bishop.

Archbishop Moeller, assisted by Revs. F. X. Dutton and Louis J. Nau, performed the last rites, while a hundred priests sang the final office.

All eyes were turned on the beloved Co-adjutor whose filial love and priestly service to the dear Father and guide, whom they were laying under ground, were so well known to all those around the grave.

As the casket was lowered, he who for twenty years stood as a son by his father, as a loyal soldier by his commander, trembled with emotion, and sobs of sympathy were heard on every side. The entire assembly, over ten thousand, then knelt in prayer, and the sod was placed over the mortal remains of the saintly Archbishop.

The cold November winds murmured a tender symphony, and the setting sun threw its parting rays over the lonely grave on the bleak hill-top, when prelates, priests, and people turned away from him whose memory in their hearts will never die.

When a good man dies, all hearts suffer loss, and hence around the bier of the saintly Archbishop, the people of Cincinnati, without regard to class or creed, stood with bended heads and hearts bowed down. They grieved for one whose goodness, whose greatness, whose purity of heart, whose sanctity of soul, whose entire consecration of life to the uplifting of mankind

## **Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder**

---

and the establishment of Christ's Kingdom on earth drew all men into loving kinship.

Archbishop Elder at the time of his consecration as Bishop of Natchez was the youngest of the American hierarchy; and, at his death, he was the oldest both in age and tenure of office. The love and esteem that had grown, ever increasing, through all those years, found expression in many beautiful tributes to his holiness and worth. A few are given here.

### **TRIBUTES TO HIS MEMORY**

These are so numerous that only a few may be mentioned. That of Cardinal Gibbons which is on our first page is one of the most beautiful. That of his Co-adjutor is given in these pages, for no one better knew the saintly Archbishop, than he who had been his daily companion for twenty years; upon whose benignant face the dying prelate looked his last; and whose supporting hand he held until death unclasped his own.

Archbishop Moeller said:

"During the quarter of a century I have been associated with Archbishop Elder, the beauty and harmony of his character have more and more unfolded themselves to me. His deeds of charity, his kindness towards the fallen, his humility, his untiring labors to promote God's glory and the salvation of souls, show how he strove to fashion his life after that of the Master. He was a man of strong faith in God, and like a simple child, relied on the assistance of his Creator. He would not intentionally wrong any one. If he feared he had made a mistake, he would at any cost rectify it. As a citizen, what fault could be found with him?

"He took a deep interest in all that concerned the welfare of the country. His life is the strongest refutation of those who

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

assert that 'A Catholic can not be a good citizen.' His last hours were in harmony with the life he lived. Those who saw the calm with which he met his death realized a saint was going from among them.

"May God grant that clergy and laity imitate the example and virtues of Archbishop Elder, and may he pray for him, upon whom his mantle has fallen and obtain for him strength and grace to labor zealously and unselfishly for God and for souls."

And what eulogy can equal these words of his Secretary, Father Gallagher, who kept constant watch in the sick chamber and who recorded that

"he is absolutely satisfied with whatever may be in store for him, and is patiently awaiting the Will of the Almighty. He is the same loving saint, dying as he lived."

Reverend David McKinney, Pastor First Reformed Presbyterian Church, said these most touching words of the venerable Archbishop:

"The Psalmist said thy gentleness hath made thee great. And the life of the genial, gentle, cultured Archbishop Elder was marked by that kind of eminence. He was regarded with great respect by Protestant Ministers. They were always eager to secure his co-operation in moral and social reform movements. In his death, the Catholic Church has lost one of its most distinguished princes and the State one of its most useful citizens."

Reverend Dr. David Philipson, Rabbi of Mound St. Temple, spoke thus:

"I respect a man who stands up strongly for his own convictions. Absolutely, as I differed from Archbishop Elder on religious grounds, yet he held my highest admiration for his stalwart attitude in reference to his own faith.

"One famous incident which I shall never forget, in which an individual Jew offered a serious affront to the Catholics, the Archbishop rose to a fine height not often reached, when he ex-

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

pressed himself to his people, to the effect that the Jewish Community at large should not be held responsible for the lapse of an individual.

“For this, if for nothing else, I shall always hold him in grateful memory. I also had private reason to know that he was very charitable.”

He was always pleased to see reporters, and as one of them relates, he often lay bare before his visitors his entire philosophy of life. It was not a perplexing and confused maze of reasoning, but an unpretentious and plain statement of the simple life. The humility of the man was irresistible. He made no claims to great power or much learning — and yet he possessed them.

“Do the thousand little things of life cheerfully and well, and as kindly as you can.” These words epitomized his rule of action and he desired all to follow it. The labor troubles of that time distressed him, and he declared that the people read too much evil and not enough wholesome literature. “Life is composed of many small duties, but the doing them well leads one on to heaven.” Having spoken thus to one of these genial reporters, he went on to tell him of the holy monk — an humble tailor, who for fifty years had plied his needle faithfully and well. The day of his death, he asked a brother monk to bring him his key of heaven. They brought him his Bible, his crucifix, his beads; but still he repeated, “Bring me my key of heaven.” Then some one thought of his needle. “Ah, that is my key of heaven,” he said, and passed away.

The old monk had taken thousands of stitches, but every one was done faithfully and well, and, added

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

the Archbishop, "So I wish all our people would spend their lives."

One reporter expressed a desire to investigate Catholic teaching, and the venerable prelate handed him two of his favorite works. They were "Faith of Our Fathers," by Cardinal Gibbons, and "Plain Facts for Fair Minds," by George M. Searle. "Our Church claims to have the truth," he said to the reporter, "and if you are really searching for the truth, is it not fair you should investigate this claim?"

Reverend Father Francis J. Finn, S.J., relates an anecdote of Archbishop Elder which shows the beautiful Christian character of the famous prelate.

"I think that Archbishop Elder is the only man I ever met who impressed me with a feeling that the man with whom I was speaking was a saint. The most beautiful trait of his character was his humility. Notwithstanding his exalted position, he was, from the time I first knew him, the most humble of men.

"It was only in the Sanctuary that he became at all different. A great contender for absolute correctness in service, and for orderly arrangement of all things connected with the service, I have seen him in the Sanctuary stand and direct, in short, sharp sentences, the placing of the furnishings of the altar.

"He did not mean to be the least imperious, or to interfere with the work of the others, whose duty it might be to perfect the arrangement, although to a stranger it might appear that his sharpness and decision were fault-finding.

"In this connection one instance will just illustrate this point:—

"On one occasion when the priests and acolytes were preparing for a service they were late, and were hurrying in their work, so as not to further delay the celebration.

"The Archbishop entered the Sanctuary. Glancing around and finding all not prepared, he began giving directions in his characteristic manner.

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

"One of the priests, already worried by the wait, turned to him and said a trifle warmly: 'Now, Archbishop, if you will only let us alone, we will have everything arranged properly in a moment, — you are worrying us.'

"The Archbishop did not reply to this, but retired to the Sacristy, and the work went on. In a moment the priest who had spoken and the others entered the Sacristy, and there before them all, the venerable Archbishop, the head of the Church in this part of the country, walked over to that poor priest, and kneeling publicly begged his pardon for having offended him."

One of the customary remarks of the Archbishop when any one called on him was: "Well, what can I do for you now?" spoken with such sweet sincerity that all hearts responded to his call.

All that he has done for reporters, visitors, and others, will never be known until the last great accounting day.

But his example and his teachings have helped many a soul to find the true "key," which unlocks for them the portals of heaven.

Charles J. Ryan, who had been Sacristan of St. Peter's Cathedral, said of the Archbishop:

"He was indeed a grand old man, and interested himself in the welfare of those in humble position, as well as those in high standing. He especially loved those with whom he was in daily contact, and after any absence, he would, upon his return, inquire as to the health of all in his absence. Then with a fervent, loving 'God bless you,' he would go to his quiet room.

"When not engaged in work, he spent his extra time in the old Cathedral he loved so well, making the Stations or kneeling for hours in prayer. I often noticed him kneeling in an odd place in the sanctuary, almost behind the main altar. My curiosity being aroused, I asked him why he knelt there; and his reply was that he was praying over the grave of Reverend Stephen Badin, first missionary priest in the United States.

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

"His reception-room was close to the Sacristy in which the Blessed Sacrament is kept during the night, and priests on sick calls often found him there late at night and early in the morning in attitude of prayer."

From a non-Catholic newspaper, this tribute is particularly beautiful:

It is not the soldier — that thousands mourn to-day; it is not the statesman who has been called to serve a higher King; it is the man of peace and humility, the minister to the low and humble, the example of righteousness to the high and mighty, whose passing is felt by every Cincinnati.

William Henry Elder was beloved by all the city, irrespective of differing creeds and denominations. In him they saw the man who had consecrated his life to serve his fellow man and his God, and who did it faithfully his whole life long.

Such a service raises a man above the controversy of creed and dogma, such a man is loved for himself and loved by all.

William Henry Elder was a great man, measured by many standards, but he was greatest in the universal love which all men held him for his good deeds.

This editorial from the *Kentucky Post* may well deserve the honor of closing all the heart-offerings of the laity and non-Catholics.

### *Archbishop William Henry Elder*

It isn't every day a man dies of whom you can say: "Copy him."

But they are laying away all that is mortal of such a man to-day, and no tomb can hide his virtues or make the world forget his kindly simplicity.

Archbishop William Henry Elder had high ideals, and lived close to them. He was unaffected, kind, and true. He was admired for his fine character in his Church, and out of it, for *true manhood is wider than the boundaries of any creed.*

It is well for the world that it can stop and ponder over the passing of such a man; well for it, to lay fragrant flowers

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

on his bier; well, that it appreciates the fine part he has played in the affairs of humanity.

He is dead, but his work goes on.

On the second anniversary of the Archbishop's death, his Most Rev. successor, Henry Moeller, delivered this impressive sermon, in the cemetery at the grave of Archbishop Elder:

"Remember, your Prelates who have spoken to you the Word of God; considering well the end of their conversation, imitate their Faith." Heb. 13-7.

*Rev. dear Fathers, and Beloved Children of the Laity*, — A dual motive has guided your steps to-day to this hallowed place. You have come to assist at the blessing of this monument, and to pray for the souls departed.

Two years ago the remains of Archbishop Elder were interred here amid the chant and prayers of the Church, and the tears welling up from hearts that revered and loved him. To-day you will witness the blessing of this monument, erected to his memory as a tribute of gratitude, love, and devotion from a loyal Clergy and Laity. It is fitting on this occasion to recall some of the deeds of his eventful career.

### *A Man of Faith*

If I were asked to lay my finger on the salient virtue of Archbishop Elder, I would say that it was a lively, active, unwavering Faith. This was the foundation, upon which he built a life that all who are fair-minded must admire. "Fides vincit mundum": "Faith overcomes the world," was the motto engraved on his shield. Faith enabled him to conquer. It spurred him on courageously to face difficulties, patiently to endure trials, faithfully to fulfil his duties towards God and man.

### *Faith Sustained Him*

He came to us when the Diocese was passing through one of the darkest days of its history. While yet Bishop of Natchez he heard of Archbishop Purcell's financial embarrassment, and he

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

was among the first who proffered help. Little did he dream, while making this offer to the aged Patriarch of the West, that it would devolve upon him to guide the Archdiocese during its trying period. In obedience to the Vicar of Christ he came to Cincinnati.

With a heavy heart he bade farewell to the people of Natchez, who revered the very ground he walked on, to assume a burden, too heavy for the bravest, unaided by faith. How cruel a thorn was driven into his heart by the misrepresentations and abuses to which he was subjected from those who had suffered by the financial failure! How poignant must have been the distress of the Archbishop, who, on the one hand was desirous to give aid, and doing all in his power for this purpose, on the other hand was blamed and maligned for a condition of things, which was beyond his control. In truth, his mitre, though lined with silk, was not without its thorns. He had reason to say with the King of old, who, when beholding his crown exclaimed, "How deceitful thou appearest in the brightness of thy jewels; but who, when seeing the thorns hidden in thee, would pick thee up from the ground?" Every fibre of the Archbishop's heart was of the most delicate texture, and hence responsive to the cry for assistance from those who had lost their earnings. His heart bled for them. Happy would he have been if he had had millions at his disposal to pay the last farthing. More than once have I heard him say that he would gladly lay down his life to pay the debt. I verily believe that among all the burdens of his administration there was none that weighed so heavily upon him as the financial problem, which he had to face as Archbishop of Cincinnati. It was on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross that he was consecrated Bishop. Did the consecration on that day foreshadow the Cross which, during the last twenty-five years of his life, he would have to bear here? What was it that sustained him during this trying ordeal? Faith, which led him back in thought to Judea, to Calvary. It recalled to his mind his Saviour, Who while He went about doing good, was misrepresented, called a malefactor, and was made to carry the Cross. The servant, he said to himself, is not above the Master; and why then should he be impatient under trials, light in comparison to those the Master had borne?

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

### *Love for God*

Faith not only inspired him with great courage, but also filled his heart with a tender love for God. A person who refuses to make sacrifices for a friend does not love him. It is by sacrifice that true love is known, and it is by this test that we can form some idea of the Archbishop's love for God. When there was question of promoting God's honor, he regarded no sacrifice as too great, no labor as too hard, no fatigue as too distressing. Moreover, to please God was the thought uppermost in his mind. Every word that he spoke, every deed that he performed had God for beginning and end. Faithfully did he carry out the Apostles' advice: "All things whatsoever you do, do for the greater honor and glory of God." Finally because he loved God, he grieved when he heard of any offence committed against his Lord. How often have I seen tears glistening in his eyes, at the recital of some crime. And on the other how he rejoiced when he heard that a sinner had repented. On such occasions his face was radiant with delight, reminding one of the joy of heaven at the return of the sinner. "There shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner doing penance."

### *Love of the Neighbor*

The love of God and the love of the neighbor are inseparable; we do not truly love God unless we also love our fellow-man. It is a revealed truth that God so loved us, that He sent His only begotten Son into the world, to suffer and die, and thus to redeem us. Faith taught his Grace that he could not claim that he loved God without loving him for whom Christ the Lord suffered so much. It would take too long to enumerate the evidences of the Archbishop's fraternal charity. We see it in his pleadings with God, for the temporal and spiritual welfare of all, especially those who were committed to his care;— we see it in his efforts to redeem the erring;— we see it in the comfort he gave the sorrowful, and the help extended to the needy. Like another Moses he daily lifted up his hands to intercede for his people. He prayed for them at Mass;— he prayed for them during his visits to the Blessed Sacrament, that they, priest and people, might love justice and hate iniquity.

## Archbishop of Cincinnati

---

### *Zeal to Save Sinners*

He realized that he must be concerned not only about the salvation of the just, but also, and especially about that of the sinner. He would have considered himself an unfaithful servant of Christ, if he did not possess in some degree the zeal which our Saviour had for the fallen. Christ at every turn in His life seemed to lie in wait for sinners. The Scribes and Pharisees murmured and grew indignant because of His condescension to the fallen. Compelled by their murmurings He uttered those instructive parables by which He foreshadowed His love for the rebellious children of God. It was this example of Christ that urged the Apostolic Archbishop to labor for the salvation of sinners; made him untiring in his efforts in their behalf. Neither the late hour of night, nor the greatest peril deterred him from endeavoring to save souls. You have heard of his heroism during the yellow fever. When his Priests were stricken down by the plague, he risked his own life to administer the last rites of the Church, to the dying sinner. You have heard of his work in the Confessional; how early in the morning, and late at night,—and this even during the last days of his life,—he would with patience and with the utmost gentleness help those who came to him, to return to their Father's Home. God alone knows how much good he did in the discharge of his duty as a Confessor.

### *Charity towards the Poor*

The love for the neighbor, springing from the love of God, we see also in the help he extended to the poor and suffering. He came to Cincinnati possessing a few hundred dollars, which his devoted people of Natchez had given him just before leaving them. Within a few days he distributed this sum among the poor creditors. From the first day of his advent to Cincinnati, to the day when the fatal illness came upon him, he helped the poor, irrespective of creed. Those who lived with him will bear me out in this statement, that many hours of the morning, were almost daily devoted to distributing alms.

## Character-Glimpses of Archbishop Elder

---

### *His Reward*

Faith then impelled him to love God with his whole heart, and to love his neighbor as himself. He kept the two great Commandments, and we may confidently hope that he enjoys the reward promised to those who obey the law. "If thou wilt enter into life keep the Commandments," says our Lord.

### *Imitate His Example*

But, my dear friends, I have spoken of the good deeds of Archbishop Elder, not so much with a view to praise him, as to urge you to imitate as far as you can his beautiful example. Bear in mind the words of the Apostle: "Remember your Prelates, who have spoken to you the word of God; imitate their faith." Be strong in faith, and exhibit the evidence of your faith in your patience and submission, when the hand of affliction is heavy upon you; show it in your ardent love of God, and in your practical charity towards the neighbor. God grant that like the Archbishop you may hate sin, and be always ready to comfort the sorrowful, and to help the needy.

We feel, dear Archbishop, that you have done your work well. May the Lord grant that we may do our work as perfectly as you did. To obtain this blessing you will plead for us. Clergy and Laity regard you still as a shepherd full of love and zeal for souls. Truly may we apply to you the words of the Apostle inscribed on your tomb: "But I most gladly will spend and be spent myself for your souls." That charity which urged you to take such great interest in them, while you were among us, is not dead, but on the contrary has been increased in heaven a hundred-fold. Brought in close contact with the burning charity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, your charity has become like His. Placed by the side of Christ, your heart will be like unto His, and you will be occupied in doing, what St. Paul tells us, the Lord is doing for us. "Semper vivens ad interpellendum pro nobis, Always living to make intercession for us."



## Contents

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	7
PART FIRST — EARLY LIFE . . . . .	11
PART SECOND — BISHOP OF NATCHEZ . . . . .	38
PART THIRD — ARCHBISHOP OF CINCINNATI . . . . .	73

## Illustrations

	FACING PAGE
WILLIAM HENRY ELDER, PORTRAIT OF 1904, WITH AUTOGRAPH . . . . .	3
ARCHBISHOP WILLIAM HENRY ELDER, D.D., PORTRAIT . . . . .	38
ARCHBISHOP W. H. ELDER, LYING IN STATE . . . . .	112
ARCHBISHOP ELDER'S GRAVE, CINCINNATI, OHIO . . . . .	148







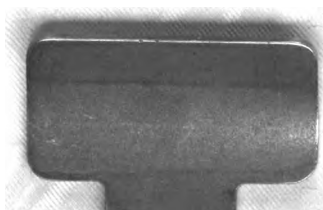




8906449929



b8906449929a



89064449929



B89064449929A

